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The Shape of Things

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AS WE GO TO PRESS, THE TVA FEUD IS reaching the point of resolution. Dr. Morgan has refused to back up his charges against his colleagues and has also refused the President's request for his resignation. At the same time the Administration is putting no hurdles in the way of a Congressional inquiry. Dorothy Thompson and others who have been trying to make another Dreyfus Affair of the case are straining the facts considerably. There is no tyranny here, but merely a dispute between the majority and minority in a federal administrative commission. Even the Humphries case, from which Miss Thompson quotes, does not apply, for the only point that case settled was that the President could not dismiss a commissioner because of the views embodied in his decisions. In this instance the President is acting on the assumption that his appointees have certain responsibilities to him as well as to Congress. Mr. Morgan's charges deeply involve the Administration's basic policies; to allow him to make them without backing them up before the President—whatever he may do before Congress later—would be to allow him enormous irresponsibility. The Congressional investigation is also necessary—if only to reassure the country about the health and progress of one of the most important federal projects in its history.

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THE SENATE IS ENACTING ALL OVER AGAIN the drama exposed by the Black lobby investigation. This time the lobbying boys seem to have been caught in a mass-production effort to bring pressure against the government-reorganization bill, just as last time they were caught manufacturing telegrams by the thousand against the public-utility holding-company bill with plenty of public-utility money. Paul Y. Anderson has scored another scoop by furnishing Senator Minton with information that has convinced him an investigation is in order. The principal target is, *mirabile dictu*, the Committee to Uphold the Constitution, which has been trying to make a holy crusade out of the opposition to the reorganization plan. We have always been suspicious of the motives of this committee with the lofty-sounding name, and we are therefore not at all surprised that Edward A. Rumely, its executive secretary, has refused to produce the committee records for Senator Min-

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ton—on the advice of his counsel, Elisha Hanson. One charge in the attack on the reorganization plan is that the Administration is "putting on the heat" to get the measure through. Another, expressed hysterically by Frank Gannett but none the less serious, is that the Minton committee on lobbying is exceeding its constitutional rights in asking his organization to produce its records. This is ultimately a question for the courts; yet it is our belief that a government that does not have this power will be crippled in its attempts to deal with paid pressure groups.

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SOMETHING LIKE A THOUSAND CITIZENS OF Barcelona were blown to pieces last week by General Franco's Knights of the Air; the officials of that great city were forced to order fire hoses turned on the streets to clear away the bits of human flesh and bone—and Cardinal O'Connell of Boston wonders why decent Americans shudder at the thought of fascism. The Loyalist government, says the Cardinal, is after all "only an unruly mob of atheists and Communists." Even granting that idiotic premise, Father, does it justify the wholesale murder of Barcelona's civilians? The answer to that is simple. "I don't believe it," says the Cardinal. Every major newspaper in the world reports the charnel house which Franco's bombers have made of Barcelona; every newspaper reports that no military objective was attained; but Cardinal O'Connell of Boston doesn't believe it. "Franco would not do a thing like that," he says; "it must have been a military maneuver," although he knows as well as anyone that the bombs that wrecked Barcelona were accompanied by showers of leaflets offering the citizens the alternative: "Surrender or perish." But his veracity is as unimportant as it is dubious. What matters is that a cardinal of the Catholic church excuses the brutality which the conservative New York *Times* asserts has left fascism a "stench in the nostrils of the world." We fully believe that if the Catholic hierarchy does not want to smash its institution on the rocks of social progress it would do well to strip the robes of authority from such traitors to human decency as William Cardinal O'Connell of Boston.

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G. E. R. GEDYE, CORRESPONDENT IN VIENNA for the New York *Times,* has during the past three weeks recorded the death of a great city in a series of dispatches that are among the finest examples of modern journalism. His day-by-day moving picture of a nation that was doomed and of the steady approach of its destroyer, armed with guns and lies, became at times almost intolerable. At the end, when thousands of Austrians and the spirit of Vienna itself were seeking escape through borders already lined with bayonets, Mr. Gedye, on his precarious island of safety as a foreign correspondent, sent dispatches written in cold anger describing the true nature of the "liberation" in terms that the most fulsome Nazi propaganda will not soon erase from the minds of his readers.

BERLIN IS REPORTED TO BE DISMAYED AT the round-up of Integralists in Brazil and at the crushing of the plot to oust Dictator Vargas. There can be no doubt of Vargas's sincere desire to smash the Nazi-supported Integralists, but anti-fascists would do well to restrain their cheers. For Vargas's action promises not the least relaxation in what is fully as bloody and tyrannical a rule as any that Europe can boast. Vargas is engaged in the dangerous game of playing off Germany against the United States, and right now he needs Washington capital more than he needs the cotton customers of Berlin. The Integralist followers of Plinio Salgado demagogically make capital of the foreign control of Brazil's resources—always a sure-fire appeal in Latin American politics because it is essentially valid—while Vargas, who calls himself a champion of Brazil for the Brazilians, is careful to do nothing that might thin the flow of northern dollars. It is in this light that we must view the statements that poured out of Washington at the time of his coup deploring the attacks on Vargas as a fascist. It may not even be far-fetched to relate the timing of the blow against the Integralists with the recent elevation to the post of Foreign Minister of Oswaldo Aranha, who is on the friendliest terms with Washington. The struggle in Brazil, in short, is between American and German imperialism, and we should not care greatly about the outcome were it not for its effect on Brazil's foreign policy. The Vargas dictatorship is reprehensible and in no way to be trusted, but the success of the Integralists would at one blow remove the Atlantic Ocean as a barrier to the fascist advance on America.

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THE RAILROADS ARE THE BIGGEST SINGLE factor blocking recovery. That accounts for the Administration's anxiety to break the railroad log-jam. As we go to press, the nation is waiting for a report to the President by a special committee of three ICC commissioners, headed by Chairman Splawn, recommending a definite plan. It is no secret that RFC government money has been going into the railroads as into a bottomless pit; no secret that despite the 6½ per cent rate increase recently granted by the ICC many of them will be unable to make bond-interest payments without more RFC money; no secret that the Baltimore and Ohio has been in trouble for months and that the Southern Pacific is now flying distress signals. The Administration is eager on the one hand to give some confidence to the bond market, and on the other hand to spur the purchase of railway equipment. How it can do both is a little difficult to see. The railroads have gone on a buying strike; many of them are so run down that they live from hand to mouth in operating terms. They will buy equipment only if they can be relieved of the oppressive fixed charges on an inflated bonded indebtedness. But in order to soothe the bond market the Administration is trying to save the junior as well as the senior bonds. This is the snag the President is caught on. A lot of talk is heard about consolidation and the operating economies it would

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effect, and more talk about railroad labor as a stumbling-block in this effort. But the crux of the matter is not so much operating economies—important though they are—as the impossible fixed charges; and those can be dealt with only by scaling down the capitalization. Will the President have the courage?

*

BEHIND THE PENNSYLVANIA DEMOCRATIC split are complicated wheelings and maneuverings in anticipation of 1940 and a perilous trial of labor's independent strength in politics. The Democratic State Committee, boss-ridden in the traditional Pennsylvania style, has nominated a slate of Governor Earle for the Senate and Charles A. Jones for governor, completely ignoring labor. The labor forces under John L. Lewis have joined Senator Guffey, with the benevolent "neutrality" of J. David Stern of the Philadelphia *Record,* and put up Tom Kennedy of the United Mine Workers for governor while supporting Earle for the Senate. Mr. Roosevelt has declared his "neutrality" also; but two days after seeing the President, Governor Earle himself came out for the Jones slate of the regular machine. The result will be an unlovely primary fight in which—whoever wins—the Democratic Party is certain to come out the loser, for the struggle is causing a deep split between the left and right wings of the party. The Jones slate has the regular machine and the state patronage behind it; the Kennedy slate has the federal and WPA patronage and the C. I. O. miners' and steel workers' strength behind it. If the Kennedy-Lewis-Guffey combination wins, labor will gain a commanding position not only in Pennsylvania but in general in the 1938 and 1940 elections; if it loses, the prestige of the tory wing of the Democratic Party will be enormously increased throughout the country.

*

IN THE WANING HOURS OF ITS FINAL session, when the members, one reporter observed, were in a "stupor of fatigue," New York's legislature rushed through a bill barring "advocates of communism" from civil service and teaching jobs. This measure would be dangerous and reprehensible if it were aimed at Communists alone; but as a matter of fact such laws are invariably indiscriminate and far-reaching in their effect, applicable to almost every field of progressive activity. Particularly ironic in connection with this bill is the temper of its advocates. When it appeared likely to die in committee, Jeremiah T. Cross, state commander of the American Legion, predicted the eventual use of "storm troops to recapture our own institutions and government." Charles R. McConnell, Brooklyn assemblyman, announced, "I'm for anything that will kill a Communist." The amazing fact is that most of this tumult has been artificially created, with no foundation in either public danger or popular demand. It is reasonable to anticipate that Governor Lehman will veto this bill as firmly as he rejected demands for Mr. Isaacs's removal. In doing so he can set at rest all rumors of impending *Anschluss* between New York and Jersey City, and forestall the hysteria which such a law's enactment would encourage throughout the nation.

*

WILLIAM RANDOLPH HEARST HAS PRIDED himself on being able to clothe the most tortured reasoning in language as simple as Gospel. Last Monday he reversed his usual literary practice and presented a simple idea in language that must have made little sense to the few readers who waded through its planned turgidity. This was the biggest Hearst story of his career, but it was tucked away on an inside page and it began:

> The discussion of provisions made through voting-trust arrangements for continuity of control and operation of other newspaper groups has brought inquiries regarding whether similar provisions may have been made by Mr. William Randolph Hearst.

Those who had the patience to struggle through this jigsaw puzzle learned that William Randolph Hearst was no longer in command of his own journalistic empire, that an executive committee had been formed to take it over last October, and that Clarence J. Shearn had become voting trustee for ten years in charge of the properties. The news gives some support to rumors that the Chase National Bank has had control of Hearst's papers and other holdings since October. Mr. Shearn is referred to by the Hearst statement as a "friend of many years' standing," but his chief recommendation as trustee seems to be that he broke with Hearst as long ago as 1919. The statement talks of "gradual liquidation." It is clear that Hearst's fate was decided last September when he withdrew an application for a $35,000,000 debenture issue without waiting for the SEC to act upon it; withdrawal of the application, as decided by the Supreme Court in the James case, ended any liability for statements made in it.

*

THE FIRST SPRING DAY BROUGHT US A NEW issue of the *Countryman,* and we can announce without reservation that England is still there. The *Countryman,* in its own words, "comes from the country," and there is no need to ask which country. Within its covers, the color of new grass, the Marquess of Tavistock remembers The Salmon of My Dreams, and Sir Rowland Sperling is concerned with the vital question: Shall We Abolish Rabbits? The Leader of the Opposition in His Garden is the uncompromising title of an article by the Right Honorable C. R. Attlee on his favorite piece of earth, and Sir Philip Pilditch contributes to a group of papers on Badgers We Have Known. In general the *Countryman* has the charm as well as the smugness of that exquisite headline which once appeared in the London *Times* when a storm was raging in the Channel. It read "Continent Isolated." In a world of stress the *Countryman* is a quarterly refuge. But there are signs that it too is disturbed by the affairs of the outside world. This quarter it prints an article headed Other People's Countrysides: Skunks in Ontario. It may yet get round to Nazis in Austria. But we can't help hoping not.

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End the Embargo Against Spain!

IF WAR breaks out in Europe, future historians will place a large share of the responsibility upon American foreign policy from 1919 to the present day. The list of particular sins will be long and impressive. It will include American acquiescence in the shameless farce at Versailles and lay special stress upon our iniquitous and suicidal tariff policy from 1921 through 1932, which was primarily responsible for the depression, the rise of autarchy and economic nationalism, and the breakdown of world economic interdependence. Chapters will be written dealing with the failure of the United States to support the League in the critical days of September and October, 1931, when Japan launched what proved to be the first of a series of assaults on international law and equity, as well as with our subsequent failures in the case of Ethiopia, Spain, and China—failures which undoubtedly contributed to the breakdown of the League and collective security during these trying years. Special attention will be paid to our incredible blindness respecting war debts and to Roosevelt's blunder in breaking up the London Economic Conference when wise leadership might have brought forth an agreement calculated to ease already mounting tensions throughout the world.

All this, however, is history. Notwithstanding the very commendable report of the Committee of Experts of the Campaign for World Economic Cooperation, referred to elsewhere in this issue, little can now be done to correct the fundamental errors of the 20's and early 30's. An announcement that the United States was prepared to throw its massive economic strength in the balance against those who are precipitating war might head off chaos. But such an announcement cannot be expected. Secretary Hull, in his address before the National Press Club, indicated that the United States was prepared to make a "reasonable contribution to a firm establishment of a world order based on law." He was not, however, either clear or positive. He gave no indication how far the government was prepared to go in this crisis, the inference being that little could be expected beyond the general trade policies to which we are already committed.

Important though tariff concessions might have been eight years ago, they obviously will not stop war now. The only type of economic action that could prevent war is a definite refusal by the United States and Great Britain to give economic assistance to aggressors and an open policy of support for victims of aggression.

Specifically, this implies an immediate reversal of our "neutrality" policy in Spain. Under existing law the Spanish government is denied the right of purchasing arms to defend itself. Meanwhile the rebels are obtaining huge supplies not only from Germany and Italy but indirectly, through the fascist countries, from the United States. As a result Spain today is in grave peril. For a time last week it looked as if Franco would break through to the Mediterranean and thus separate Valencia and Madrid from Barcelona. Although the rebel offensive has been slowed down, the danger is not past. Louis Fischer's article on another page of this issue shows the extreme odds against which the Loyalists are fighting.

In this crisis the gravest responsibility rests upon France. But French aid has almost stopped because of British pressure and because of French anxiety over the American Neutrality Act. With German airplane factories turning out several times as many planes as French factories, France fears to supply planes in quantity to the Loyalists lest it be unable to replace them by purchases from this country in time of crisis. Prompt action by the United States is necessary if the Spanish government is not to suffer defeat as the result of the unneutral effect of the Neutrality Act.

Fortunately, however, it is not necessary to wait for repeal of the act in order to send help to Spain. In the case of a civil war the act specifically states that whenever in the judgment of the President the civil strife is not "being conducted under such conditions that the export of arms, ammunition, or implements of war . . . would threaten or endanger the peace of the United States," the President shall revoke his previous proclamation and the provisions of the same shall cease to apply. Surely no one would suggest that the shipment of supplies to the Spanish government under present circumstances "endangers the peace of the United States." On the contrary, failure to act so encourages the fascist powers that it constitutes a clear challenge not only to peace but to the philosophy on which all decent international relations must rest. The Neutrality Act should not be confused, however, with the embargo resolution of January 8, 1937, which can only be repealed by Congress.

There is every reason to believe that the Administration would be glad to revoke application of the Neutrality Act, but it will not move without some assurance of

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popular support. Every person who recoils at the brutal bombing of Barcelona, who believes that Spain should have a right to decide its own fate, or who feels that France and the other democratic powers should be free to aid Spain and protect themselves from fascist aggression should take two immediate steps. He should wire his Congressman urging immediate revision or repeal of the Neutrality Act and repeal of the embargo, and he should dispatch an equally urgent message to the President asking for revocation of the Neutrality Act as applied to Spain. This should be followed by an effort to get as many other persons, and as influential persons as possible, to do likewise.

Hitler's Cold War

THE searchlight of public attention swung over the European continent during this past anxious week, picking out a new spot of crisis or disaster almost every day: first Austria, then Czechoslovakia, then Spain, then the Polish-Lithuanian border, with momentary halts in London and Paris and Berlin. Let us not forget last week, for in later days it will be recognized as crucial, no matter how many weeks of tension may follow. It ended in a moment's breathing spell, but even the calm is charged with ominous possibilities.

German Nazi officials have begun the job of clearing Austria of active opposition, passive dissent, Jews, Socialists, and civilization. The little country has become a province of the Reich; but it is a conquered province held by an army of occupation. So far its new rulers have met with no trouble: the Austrian army has been absorbed by the German military establishment; Austrian officials have been supplanted by German officials or subordinated to them; even the Austrian Nazi Party has been reorganized by a representative of Hitler and is now no more than a modest branch of the National Socialist Party of the Third Reich. Prominent Jews and former officials have taken their lives in considerable numbers. Several thousand enemies of the new regime are in prison. But the fiction of unanimity is widely proclaimed in the press and on the air, and Hitler, in his public apologia before the Reichstag, based his wanton act exclusively on the sufferings and desires of the suppressed people of the late Austrian republic. Mussolini came to heel with a resounding speech supporting the conquest of Austria as "inevitable," reiterating his faith in the axis and his scorn for the democracies, and in general making the best of what still must look like a poor bargain.

The threat to Czechoslovakia implicit in Hitler's march to Vienna and explicit in his promise to "protect" German minorities everywhere (except, presumably, in the South Tyrol) resulted in a series of swift maneuvers. German troops were reported moving through Austria to the unprotected Czechoslovak frontier. France and Russia repeated and strengthened their pledge of armed help to Czechoslovakia in case of a Nazi invasion, and France and Czechoslovakia tried in vain to get similar assurances of backing from Great Britain. But Chamberlain sat tight on his fence and still sits there, while storms of political opposition whistle around his head.

The French Cabinet, formed after desperate efforts by Léon Blum, was able to agree on its already-pledged support of Czechoslovakia but on little else. It is a shaky affair and unlikely to hold together unless Blum manages to overcome the stubborn hostility of the right which has prevented the formation of a national front to oppose fascist conquest in Central Europe and in Spain. The right politicians frankly prefer Hitler, Mussolini, and Franco to collaboration with even a minority representation of French Communists.

The desperate crisis in Spain makes the attitude of the French Cabinet, with all its troubles, impossible to excuse. The Loyalist government and army are making what may be a last stand against the mechanized forces of Franco. As Louis Fischer's dispatch shows, Spain cannot hold out unless it has substantial material help in its solitary battle against international fascism. Only from France can the Loyalists get equipment in large amounts quickly.

The Polish ultimatum to Lithuania was no detached phenomenon but a logical move in the game of power politics. Poland and Germany are friends, but wary, suspicious friends, the sort the game breeds. Germany's expansion to the south encouraged Polish expansion to the north. Poland moved suddenly to end the unsettled border dispute with Lithuania and reestablish the relations that were broken after Poland's seizure of Vilna in 1920. Hitler backed Poland's demands, much as Mussolini backed Hitler's, not because he liked them but for secondary reasons that were—when added together—conclusive. And Russia, which has every reason to resist Polish expansion, was inhibited from acting by its most fundamental emotion—fear of general war. So Lithuania yielded, growling; Poland officially announced the happy termination of the dispute while mobs shouted for the annexation of Lithuania and took out their feelings in acts of terror against helpless Jews; and Germany extended a hand of blessing over the whole affair. But the shadow of the hand lies across Danzig and Memel.

Today the prospect of actual warfare has faded, and the immediate future offers a new threat. Just as Hitler has shifted his strategy at home from open terror to cold pogrom, so he may now complete the conquest of Central Europe by the process of cold warfare. Already significant hints are trickling out of Prague. The government has yielded to most of the demands of the Sudeten Germans; it has agreed to call off all newspaper attacks on Hitler if the German press will "reciprocate." Most serious of all, it is reported that Hitler is insisting that Czechoslovakia abrogate its Russian alliance as the prerequisite to any negotiations with the Reich; the polite suggestion is that since Germany now practically controls all of Czechoslovakia's trade outlets it is in a position to strangle it to death if it refuses. On the other hand the Reich will be very happy, in the event that Czechoslovakia sells its soul and body, to facilitate an economic *Anschluss* that will give Germany the yield of its neighbor's fields and a highway leading almost to the Ukraine.

Who can complain of such a deal? The other powers

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accepted the conquest of Austria with no more than a shudder and a futile protest. What can they say if Czechoslovakia "voluntarily" drops its pact with Soviet Russia, "voluntarily" signs a trade agreement with Germany, "voluntarily" yields autonomy to its German minority—to the end of "voluntarily" becoming a vassal of the Nazi state? What can they say if Poland "voluntarily" hands over Danzig to Hitler in return for his benevolent acquiescence in its own expansion, and if Hungary and Rumania accept the German yoke without audible protest? The cold war reaps its victories quietly. It can be countered only by action which pierces through pretensions to purposes and uses whatever means are required to thwart those purposes.

All Soviet Russia could do in the face of fascist advance was to propose an international conference of nonfascist powers to determine on collective measures of resistance. The proposal was useful as a demonstration of Russia's consistent position and as a yardstick by which to measure the statesmanship of other nations. But it was generally ignored, partly because it emanated from the Soviet Union and partly because the suggestion of peaceful collective action has within the last few weeks come to sound unrealistic, even faintly romantic. This is perhaps the most ominous of all the facts we have to record. It is still possible, theoretically, that Germany and Italy could be stopped without war. But the powers that could do it will not openly admit the menace that confronts them or take the risks involved. And neither will they make or threaten war. So fascism marches on, unimpeded.

Revolt Against Oil

ON MARCH 18 the showdown was reached in the stud-poker game between the Mexican government and the foreign oil companies. The oil companies had attempted to call what they fondly imagined was a government bluff by refusing to comply with a decision of the Federal Labor Board, upheld by the Supreme Court on March 1, ordering them to sign a collective contract with their workers. The order increased wage rates and social services by twenty-six million pesos a year above 1936 levels, established a forty-hour week, and granted the workers a certain degree of participation in management. The oil companies protested publicly that these conditions rendered continued operation unprofitable and, indeed, "impossible," but in private they readily enough admitted their ability to pay the increases. What they could not stomach was the loss of prestige they would suffer in Venezuela, Bolivia, and other colonial countries as a result of their trouncing at the hands of a government which they had believed they could always either browbeat or bribe into submission.

It is difficult to make any sense of the position the oil companies took, unless they were relying on their superior economic power and the hope of diplomatic backing from Washington and London. In the face of several statements from President Cárdenas, which made it abundantly clear that the government had no intention of yielding to their insolence, they flatly announced that they would obey Mexican law only if and when it conformed to their interests.

The Mexican government was left with no other course but to expropriate the oil properties as provided by law. In this connection Ambassador Daniels's statement that the United States "had been caught napping" is patently ridiculous. It was generally understood that the National Expropriation Law, passed in 1936, was designed to meet such situations. In taking over the industry the Mexican authorities were fully aware that a grave economic crisis was almost certain to follow. Not only will the oil companies and their allies, native and foreign, redouble the sabotage which they have lately been practicing against the national credit, but the reorganization will necessarily result in costly confusion, not to speak of the immediate reduction in government income. It is no secret that Mexico's general financial position has been very insecure since the first of the year, and genuine sacrifices on the part of the whole population will be required to convert into reality the economic independence that should result from the ending of foreign oil control.

This is precisely the sort of situation the reactionary and fascist groups have been praying would develop. Six months ago, when the official commission which investigated the oil industry brought in its findings, the companies are reported to have remarked that a revolution would cost them less—and they have had wide experience in such affairs. General Cedillo in central Mexico, Governor Yocupicio in northwestern Sonora, arms smugglers on the Guatemalan border, reactionary officials and discontented militarists in other parts of the country, all known to be in connivance with Nazi and Italian agents, are begging for funds to launch their long-heralded coup against the Administration. Such an uprising would have slight prospect of success under normal conditions, but if the economic and political difficulties of the country should multiply and if Washington should finally decide to favor the oil interests by adopting a "neutral" attitude, the conflict might be long, bloody, and costly.

Fortunately, the bulk of the population is solidly behind the government in this dispute. The oil companies have long been a stench in the nostrils even of those conservatives who are ordinarily to be found on the side of foreign capital. Apart from those they buy, the oil interests have no friends in Mexico, and in spite of liberal subsidies to the venal and reactionary daily press, a note of doubt and hostility has crept in even there. The plain truth is that what began eighteen months ago as a simple wage-and-hour dispute between capital and labor has now developed into a national struggle against foreign domination in which the organized workers have taken their rightful place at the head of the Mexican people. After twenty-eight years Mexico is at last in sight of one of the principal goals of the 1910 revolution—a decisive victory over the foreign imperialism which has long dominated its economic and political life. A defeat now would set Mexican progress back a generation.

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Fascism—American Style

BY PAUL Y. ANDERSON

Washington, March 21

"HOW Law and Order Came to Johnstown" or "Elementary Steps in American Fascism"—either would do as a title for the sequence of events narrated last week before the Senate Civil Liberties Committee. If both sound a trifle hard and pedantic, we might call it "The Mayor's Wife and the Mysterious Windfall." Regardless of what anyone calls it, the odor will cling to it still. For it was a dirty piece of business, and we may thank God's mercy and the invincible stupidity of the small-town vigilante mind that it went no farther. However, thanksgiving at this stage would be premature. The thing will be tried again, and the next attempt may be endowed with more imagination and perseverance than inhabit the Johnstown (Pennsylvania) Chamber of Commerce.

It was a sinister coincidence that the headlines from Barcelona and Berlin blanketed the disclosures before Senator La Follette's committee. Between events there and what was shown to have happened here existed an ominous affinity. Indeed, time may demonstrate that Johnstown was a bigger story for us than Vienna. It had all the home ingredients. There was a gaunt, hollow-eyed preacher breathing hell fire and damnation against "red radicals" and using his pulpit to raise the vigilantes. There was a rich, powerful corporation—Bethlehem Steel—bent on breaking a strike and smashing a union at whatever cost. There was a high-pressure publicity man and money-getter, who really sensed the possibilities of the situation. Finally, there was an ex-convict mayor, a former bootlegger, laboring under the urgent necessities of rehabilitating his reputation for law and order and paying his debts. Here were none of the alien, exotic elements which make our bristles rise at the mention of Communists. These were all God-fearin', baby-havin', tater-growin', night-ridin' folks, ready alike to bust a strike or pick up a stray dollar.

The Reverend John H. Stanton, whose membership in the Johnstown Chamber of Commerce is a gift from the Pennsylvania Electric Company ("I thought it was very nice of them, and I took it," he said), became excited and alarmed over the strike at Bethlehem when he discovered the strikers were asking not for higher wages or shorter hours but that the company sign a contract with the union. "I discussed it with members of the Bible class," he testified. "I decided that this was a new thing to me and certainly was very, very wrong. I concluded to call together a large group of citizens with whom I had been associated in my church work and my activities in the Rotary Club and the Chamber of Commerce."

The first person he called was Mayor Daniel J. Shields, who served a jail term once for his activities in connection with a prohibition case. The next was Francis Martin, teacher of the Bible class, president of the Chamber of Commerce, and vice-president of the bank in which Bethlehem kept its pay-roll account. The third to respond to the call was Sidney Evans, an officer in the Reverend Mr. Stanton's church and boss of Bethlehem's celebrated company union. Fourth was C. M. Ellicott himself, general manager of the plant. Thus the Citizens' Committee was launched and the absorbing sequence of events got under way.

Martin and Fulton Connor, city finance director, got a package containing $10,000 in cash from Evans's office and deposited it in the Mayor's safe. Next day Connor made a similar transfer of $15,000. Other payments followed rapidly. The fiction was that Bethlehem was donating this money to the Citizens' Committee to uphold law and order, and that the committee, in furtherance of that high purpose, was making it available to the city authorities. Two payments are in dispute. Ellicott testified that he personally gave the Mayor $4,362. His Honor hotly denies it. There is additional testimony that $6,300 was spent for gas equipment which was turned over to the police. The ex-convict chief magistrate asserts he paid for the equipment with money that he received from the committee.

Shields admitted he got in the neighborhood of $40,000, but when asked to account for it he was embarrassed. In an impetuous moment he had destroyed all records pertaining to these expenditures. Consequently he had to rely on his memory, the condition of which can only be described as deplorable. He thought he had hired between 500 and 700 special policemen (his chief of police told a state trooper the number was 250) and that their pay totaled about $9,000. He thought it cost about $2,500 to feed them, and that hauling them around in taxicabs and rented cars had cost $8,600—or maybe it was $10,600. He put in the item of $6,300 for gas and topped off the list with $6,000 "paid in rewards." His explanation of the final item must not be omitted.

A "loyal" worker was seized, stripped, and released in the streets. Shields offered $6,000 in rewards for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the culprits. Six men were arrested. Four were acquitted. Two remain to be tried. Said the Mayor: "The fellow who brought about the real apprehension got $1,000, and the fellows who made the actual discovery got $5,000."

However, the Mayor had no opportunity to destroy records at the county courthouse, and from these the Senate investigators took a harvest. In the three months following the Bethlehem strike, payments totaling $23,-

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485 were made on mortgages and delinquent taxes on property held in the name of the Mayor's wife. His Honor owns no property in his own name for an excellent reason: judgments totaling some $100,000 are outstanding against him, including a $75,000 government lien arising from his connection with an illicit brewery, and the unpaid fees of the lawyers who defended him. It seems that Mrs. Shields had a "windfall," but when asked to describe it the Mayor's memory betrayed him again.

With the strike broken and all the damn agitators in retreat, it was natural for Johnstown's triumphant patriots to think of a "Citizens' National Committee" that would carry the true gospel throughout the nation. However, the real author appears to have been John Price Jones, an astute New York publicity man who supervises the collection of funds for refined seats of learning. Invitations were sent to numerous employer groups throughout the country, a meeting was called at Johnstown, and Jones wrote the resolutions in advance. The affair was not an unqualified success, although $19,000 was collected, which included donations of $1,000 each from Richard K. Mellon, nephew of the sainted Andrew, and Ernie Weir. Most of it went for page advertisements in metropolitan papers urging other cities to emulate Johnstown, and calling on public officials to use the forces at their command to safeguard "the right to work."

It was a promising start, but it suffered from the limitations of the leaders. The Reverend Mr. Stanton was temporary chairman and his successor was never named. Jones, the high-geared go-getter who possessed the imagination, experience, and connections essential for a proper exploitation of the idea, was fired because his fees were too high for Johnstown standards and has so far been unable to collect in full from the local patriots.

But, mark my words, we have not seen the end of this adventure in American fascism. It is too obviously "a natural." It is a very effective way of getting dirty work done, and American industry pays fancy prices for that particular kind of dirty work.

What Can Save Spain?

BY LOUIS FISCHER

Paris, March 21

THIS has been a heartbreaking week for pro-Loyalists, and the repeated barbarous bombings of Barcelona make the cup of woe almost full. The republican army is well supplied with small weapons but has practically no first-line bombers, only one-third as many pursuit planes as the rebels, and too little artillery to conduct a large-scale war. During the past three weeks Germany and Italy have poured in a constant stream of airplanes, cannon, and men. What the Loyalists possess, what they can manufacture, and the limited quantities they can import by devious routes no longer suffice to cope with Franco's augmented armaments. In the first week of March it looked as if the Loyalists could hold out no longer unless they received help from France.

During this crisis Negrín slipped into Paris incognito (it is characteristic of this civilized Spaniard that he was found one day, by an American friend, in Brentano's buying books), but France had no government—and it then got Blum. The two Socialist premiers met, and there is no doubt that Blum, conscious of his invidious role as the father of non-intervention, wanted to atone for the death and destruction in Spain which his policy had caused. "Wanted to," but he hasn't done so yet, and all the rumors regarding vast shipments of French arms to the Loyalists boil down to a few old cannon and a handful of airplanes. Soviet artillery is coming into Catalonia in greater volume, and the French have promised not to hamper the transit of several shiploads of Soviet pursuit bombers. These are the concrete gains of last week. In principle French non-intervention is dead, but actually French aid so far has been infinitesimal.

When every day is marked by serious Loyalist military reverses, Blum's Socialist government has again exposed the Spanish republic to the mercies of Hitler and Mussolini. The resentment against Blum grows in leaps and bounds. But France hasn't yet definitely decided not to act. The pressure on the Cabinet from military, trade-union, and certain bourgeois circles is the major factor in both the internal and the external situation. Temporarily the franc is well-nigh forgotten, and Spain dominates all minds. The rebels' menacing Aragon offensive pointed the moral of Austria and placed the threat to Czechoslovakia in a correct setting. At this conjuncture of unhappy circumstances an increasing number of Frenchmen are convinced that Spain constitutes a vital French problem.

France could no nothing about Austria except to conceal its fright. The only official reaction was the public reiteration of its pledge to Czechoslovakia, but with Germany and Italy in Spain this pledge is practically worthless. The Czechs, Russians, and a handful of astute French publicists have not hesitated to make this devastating estimate of Blum's bravest gesture. Moreover, the general staff is peculiarly sensitive to anything happening in Catalonia, and the fact that the army of German-Italian puppets approached France's vulnerable southeastern boundary at the very moment of the Austrian coup converted the French assets in Central Europe into

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military liabilities and sowed panic in Paris. France's position from the standpoint of military strategy has become most unenviable.

The reactions to this disastrous development have been varied. Some anti-fascists, a group of generals, and several Radical-Socialist leaders have demanded the immediate occupation of Minorca and Catalonia. There has been talk of investing Spanish Morocco. It is rumored—we've been deluged with rumors—that Paul-Boncour told the British ambassador, Sir Eric Phipps, of these plans, and the Englishman, of course, held up his hands in holy horror. The idea of direct army and navy intervention is already dead or shelved, but its birth reflects how seriously the situation is viewed. The reactionary and perhaps Mussolini-subsidized *Journal* shouted, "We will revolt" if France marches, and pusillanimous government leaders, visibly suffering a terrific nervous strain, saw visions of a civil war in France if they attempted to end the civil war in Spain.

As an alternative it was suggested that heavy war material be sent to the assistance of the Loyalists. Here the French, more than ever a nation of meticulous accountants, checked up on available supplies and said that they had discovered a terrifying deficiency in just what the Loyalists needed—airplanes and artillery. If this is being used as an excuse, it is also at least partially true. Jouhaux, who speaks for five million workingmen, went to Blum and declared the workers in the armament industries would produce more if they knew some arms might go to Spain; the Paris metal workers' union promised one hour of unpaid overtime daily if the weapons produced therein were sold to the Loyalists. The Russians have probably indicated that they would make good to the French in a few weeks anything sent the Loyalists during these crucial days, and unofficial Americans have hinted that the French, like the Italians and Germans, might easily replenish their stocks by purchases in America. But the government chiefs have sighed, wrung their hands, and made pathetic avowals of their love for the Spanish republic.

Conveniently, stories have been circulated—by whom?—about the impending German mobilization, and Paris wished to know whether England would help her should Germany attack while France was temporarily depleting its arsenals to save the Loyalists. If Chamberlain was asked, his reply is not difficult to imagine. Blum is tired, and his fatigue accentuates the intellectual's normal tendency to find additional reasons for doing nothing. A possible successor, Daladier, would do more than Blum can, and Herriot, who is holding himself in reserve, could do more than Daladier would. Flandin, controlling an important bloc of right deputies, vetoes a strong government of national union because it would have enough popular support to venture overt assistance to the Loyalists, whereas the Socialists and Communists will join such a national ministry only if it helps Spain. France is divided and pacifist, and young men basking in the glorious spring sunshine with their girls think how terrible it would be to have to go to the trenches. This attitude makes the governmental policy. A remnant of the bourgeoisie still hopes that after a rebel victory Hitler and Mussolini will give Franco an affectionate farewell kiss and bow in the direction of the French and British, while the majority in the owning classes, better capitalists than Frenchmen, would apparently rather see the Spanish social revolution crushed than see France safe.

All observers agree that most of these difficulties would disappear if an effective anti-Chamberlain rebellion created the possibility of British approval of French action in Spain. Internal political hurdles would be lowered by a smile from London. The next scene in the Spanish drama will be enacted at Westminster. Franco's military time schedule, however, is not fixed in accordance with foreign parliamentary debates or ministerial alignments. The Loyalists' needs are urgent. It is very likely that in two months adjustments in French political life and military affairs would warrant wide assistance to the Loyalists. But should Barcelona lose ground in the interval, even its friends might contend that it was too late to help. And what if, while the French and British waste valuable time, Hitler marches into Czechoslovakia or establishes a *gleichgeschaltet* Hungary? Prophets can be found who predict both these events within the next fortnight. It sounds fantastic, but so was the rape of Austria.

I was in Madrid in November, 1936, when its fall seemed inevitable. The bourgeois Republicans fled first; the Cabinet followed; but the Socialist-Communist junta rescued the capital, and since then its unyielding heroism has become a symbol to the apathetic democratic world. Barcelona also maintains a wonderful spirit under the murderous rain of explosives. The martyred Spanish people may yet be capable of miraculous effort. But in the long run man is powerless against mounting accumulations of modern technical equipment, and Hitler and Mussolini want a quick conclusion of the Spanish war so that they may hunt elsewhere.

Not only international peace but everything treasured by decent human beings everywhere is now at stake in Spain. The Barcelona bombings are a sample of the fascist morality which is sweeping Europe. Yet democratic governments are paralyzed by cowardice, enmeshed in legislation, sacrificing the highest national interests and stacking the cards for war ostensibly because they want to prolong peace a while longer, but actually because they abhor the social progress represented by the Loyalists. And without more foreign aid it will be difficult for Barcelona to continue to offer resistance. Already, in sessions last week which almost exactly paralleled the Brest-Litovsk debates of the Bolshevik Central Committee, the voting in the Loyalist Cabinet revealed a pro-armistice party. Negrín succeeded in overpowering this trend, but if the tide of battle continues strongly against the Loyalists the trend may grow. I have faith, however, in the plain Spanish people, whose capacity to die, to suffer, and to fight I have seen, and I trust them to carry on bravely despite a few wavering politicians. Everything is possible in Spain, in France perhaps, and even in England. Europe is crazy.

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Czechoslovakia Holds the Key

BY HENRY B. KRANZ

I SHALL never forget the thin little old cook with whom I boarded for eight months in Budejovice. (In those days this small town in Bohemia was still called Budweis. Since then all the cities have had to exchange their German names for Czech ones.) It was during the first year of the war, and the table which the old lady set was so lavish and varied that I did not see how she could afford it at the low prices she charged for board and lodging. Being an Austrian officer, I had enough money to get along on, and I did not want to accept any presents from the good lady. So one day I asked her, "Why do you give me so much for so little money?" She looked at me very gently, then answered in her broken German, "The poor officer must soon go into the trenches, where he will surely die. I wanted to see him have a good meal first."

She was a Czech. Like her countrymen she was naive yet realistic, industrious and vital, unhindered by too much delicacy of feeling, very upright, sage, and rather cautious. These qualities, combined with a talent for organization, made the Czechs for centuries excellent servants of the Hapsburgs. They were vigilant officials, correct officers, and even wise ministers. Geniality, however, was not one of their qualities.

The Czechs were the first autonomists of the twentieth century. They had a hatred for the empire and resented the Teutonism which was imposed upon them. They began to build up a culture of their own, steeping themselves in the almost forgotten history of their ancient past. They did not want to be Europeans. They wanted to be Czechs. Then the war came. The Czechs achieved their goal. And overnight they turned into the best Europeans. They were still nationalistic, but they refused to persecute others for belonging to a foreign nation, race, or religion. Dr. Benes, the present president of the republic, expressed their attitude simply when he said to a group of students recently, "The moral principle underlying our democracy is the ethical concept that the prime unit of political life is the individual and not a party, class, or nation."

The land of the Czechs is blessed. The countryside is beautiful with lush meadows, broad cultivated fields, and wooded knolls. Bohemia is encircled by magic mountains. It has rich mines of coal, iron ore, and salt. Hot springs in Karlsbad, Franzensbad, and Marienbad attract hundreds of thousands of tourists. The traveler gains the impression that this is a land of "milk and honey" where no one can ever starve.

But are the Czechs really the masters here? They are not. For there are the minorities. Balancing the Czechs are three and a half million Germans, two and a half million Slovaks, three-quarters of a million Hungarians, half a million Ruthenians, and some half-million Poles and other aliens—seven and three-quarter million non-Czechs as against six and a half million Czechs. For ten years after the war these minorities lived side by side in comparative peace, disturbed by no more than a few small causes of friction. During those ten years the young state enjoyed great prosperity and business expansion. Eager to become independent of Germany and Austria, the government encouraged new industries.

Soon the Czechs had the biggest and most modern shoe factory in Europe. It was founded by a little man who, thanks to his American business methods, became a millionaire. His name—Bata—is a household word not only throughout Europe but in Shanghai, Bombay, Rio de Janeiro, and Cape Town. No wonder. A good pair of shoes by Bata costs only two dollars. Czech automobiles, the speedy Tatras, are good as well as cheap. Czech textiles are taken to England to be exported to the world as "Made in England." Czech lace and Czech glassware are world-famous. And exports increased by 100 per cent during 1937. In the same year the revenue from taxes was a billion crowns (thirty million dollars) greater than in 1936.

But Europe is a continent of "awakened" nations. The Slovaks were the first to show signs of discontent. They are a strong, industrious peasant folk. Their speech, while it resembles Czech, is more colorful and less developed. Their gaily colored national costumes, melancholy folk songs, and over-bright paintings bespeak their Slavic origin. Their country was formerly a part of Hungary.

Andreas Hlinka, the leader of the Slovak Nationalist Party, has of late been urgently demanding autonomy. He bases his demands on a report prepared in 1918 by Czechs and Slovaks living in Pittsburgh to convey to the Peace Conference their ideas as to the future Czechoslovakia, specifically so named. Actually this report said not a word about autonomy or about two equal and sovereign states. And a large proportion of the Slovaks continue to support the national government. They point to the fact that in the national convention of 1920 the constitution and the language laws of the young republic were accepted by all parties, including Hlinka's adherents. Minister Hodza, a good Slovak in his own right, attacks Hlinka for sabotaging the state.

Bratislava, the capitol of Slovakia, a charming Danube town, once went by the good German name of Pressburg. The Hungarians called it Pozsony. Today this city with a triple name and nationality, only two hours distant from Vienna, is a favorite resort and also important as a commercial center. Much German is spoken there, less Hungarian, and still less Slovak. The Jewish ghetto is one of the oldest in Europe. The various racial groups get along famously, for the Czechs have met the Slovaks more than halfway. Slovak writers, painters, and musi-

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cians are helped by prize money offered by the state. The Slovak national theater is subsidized by the state.

But even in their own part of the country the Slovaks are a minority. The largest group there is German. Some 600 elementary schools and 3 high schools have been erected for 22,000 German children. In the Carpathians are Ruthenians and Hungarians. Laslo Dzurany, editor of the Hungarian newspaper, *Magyar Ujsag,* formerly published in Bratislava, now in Praha, has declared, "We are Magyar with every breath we breathe and every nerve in our bodies."

The German problem is even more involved. For the Germans of Czechoslovakia live not only along the frontier, in the border country adjacent to Germany where there are natural barriers of forest and mountain, but also scattered through the interior of the country. In Mähren they form a strong minority. The capital city of Mähren, Brno (formerly Brünn), has always been a center of German culture. The same is true of Silesia and its capital city, Troppau. The autonomy which Konrad Henlein, the Nazi leader, demands for these Germans would mean the complete collapse of the republic.

The border Germans are intrenched in the richest areas of Czechoslovakia. At Aussig, Dix, and Komotau are the coal resources of the country. In Joachimstal is the largest source of radium in Europe. Teplitz-Schönau has a flourishing glass industry. Machine factories, iron works, and leather-goods factories are in German hands. A person setting foot in one of these cities has the sense of being in Germany. The theaters produce German plays; the newspapers you read are German. (Czechoslovakia has 249 German papers; Austria only 235.) If you ask a stranger on the street for directions in Czech he will answer you in German. The street names have stayed German. And all the German theaters, all the German schools, are supported by the government.

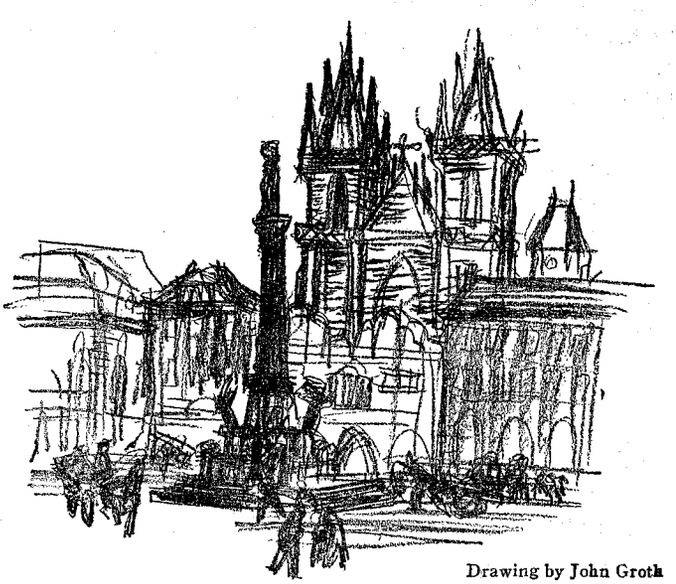
It is not correct to say that all these Germans are for Hitler. In 1935 at the last elections Henlein had only one and a quarter million votes. The German Social Democrats stand firm for the young state. And the 350,000 Jews in Czechoslovakia, who belong to the German cultural group, certainly have no desire to become Hitler's subjects. There are three German ministers in the Cabinet. Dr. Erwin Zajecek, head of the German Christian Socialist National Party, who leads the forces opposing Henlein with cleverness and foresight, believes that he will be able to unite all Germans on a platform of democracy.

All political struggles are brought to a head in Praha. In this two-nation city the contrast between the two peoples is most obvious. The old Prague, baroque, spooky, medieval, with narrow, dark streets, is German. The new Praha, with its modern housing, its concrete buildings, its noise and American bustle, is Czech. On the streets you hear all the languages of the country, and you can buy newspapers in all these tongues. The theater is international, producing not only Czech plays but the best that the contemporary Hungarian, French, English, and American stage has to offer. In no other European city are so many American plays produced. In no other European city are there so many American volumes in the bookstores. In no other city do they speak so enthusiastically of American industrial methods.

The readiness with which Praha takes in strangers who are exiles from their own country is also reminiscent of America. Here most of the German poets, dramatists, painters, and scholars have taken refuge. Heinrich Mann, Thomas Mann's brother, is a Czechoslovak today, as are also Erich Kleiber and Fritz Zweig, the well-known conductors. Thirty thousand German liberals and socialists live in Praha.

Praha is continually being refreshed by young talent from the fertile countryside of which it is the center, by the vigorous youngsters of the Czech villages and towns. There are no border Germans among them. The Germans are making eyes at Berlin. They have little desire to come to Praha, where the Jews and radicals live. So the strong young talents developing there are Czech. The dramatists, Carel Capek, Jaroslav Durych, Tyl, Hilbert, Werner, Frantisek Langer, all write realistic modern plays, full of originality and force. Mrstik, Benes, Pujmanova, Zak, Olbracht, Polachek, Knap, Hostovsky are the most popular novelists. The young Czechs are fond of French and Russian literature and also of the French and Russian cinema, along with the American. They eagerly read Jules Romains, John Gunther, Upton Sinclair, Sinclair Lewis, and Thomas Mann.

How long will Czechoslovakia be able to develop its theater, its art, its industry? Situated in the midst of dictatorships, with a long frontier singularly unprotected by nature on the Hungarian side, made up of five different peoples—can such a nation survive? The history of Switzerland shows that it is possible. Surely France and England will not deliver this young, strong, freedom-loving state into the hands of a barbarous tyrant; will not allow the last haven of democracy and humanism to disappear from the face of Central Europe. Not the fate of Austria but the fate of Czechoslovakia will determine the future of Europe.



Drawing by John Groth

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War in the Peace Movement

BY JAMES WECHSLER

II

THE National Peace Conference has grimly endured the Spanish and Far Eastern wars. Its survival has been insured by its gradual refusal to recognize any foreign belligerence. Unable to agree on a policy with respect to European conflicts, the conference threatens to become a local branch of the Non-Intervention Committee.

That the uninterrupted success of fascist aggression menaces everything for which the peace societies have labored is tragically evident. Yet in their joint sessions their leaders speak of fascism as a "political" factor which is too dangerous to receive realistic appraisal. The truth, of course, is that the conference, hopelessly divided on vital issues, has nourished a passion for non-essentials. Shunning any collective—and non-violent—technique of dealing with aggression, the isolationists threaten to withdraw from the conference if such action is indorsed; their opponents seem to have decided to drop the subject.

In recent months two tendencies have been noted in the sessions of the conference. Less and less attention has been given to the wars now going on in Spain and the Far East. And with these conflicts soft-pedaled, the delegates have concentrated their energies on the Campaign for World Economic Cooperation. That campaign is now reaching a climax in Washington, where it is in process of giving birth to an Americanized Van Zeeland report.

The Far Eastern war created a word crisis in the peace movement. The story of the N. P. C.'s attempt to issue a statement expressing its attitude is a case history of indecision and petty bickering. Shortly after Japan's attack the peace societies conducted an informal poll which gave them a preview of their dilemma. This poll disclosed sharp division on American policy, with about a two-to-one vote for enforcement of the Neutrality Act as against collective action, and with a substantial bloc favoring organized indecision. On October 4 Oswald Garrison Villard demanded, according to the conference minutes, that the body "go on record with an emphatic general denunciation of activities in the Far East, stressing the unprovoked attack upon China and the violation of international law." He also urged an immediate protest meeting at Town Hall, a proposal which was judiciously tabled. Thus prodded by Mr. Villard, the conference empowered its director—Walter Van Kirk—to draft an expression of indignation. But just as Dr. Van Kirk undertook this task, President Roosevelt delivered his celebrated Chicago speech, which created panic among the isolationists. Their indignation against Hirohito shifted to Roosevelt overnight. Undaunted, Dr. Van Kirk on October 6 circulated his first draft voicing the conference's "moral indignation" at Japan's aggression.

A draft riot followed. The isolationists rose up against it, fearful lest the words should be interpreted as support for the President's Chicago speech. On October 14 Dr. Van Kirk was still sending around a draft of the statement, "still hopeful that it will be possible for the National Peace Conference to reach substantial agreement regarding a statement of our policy with respect to this matter"—that is, the Far Eastern war. Not until two weeks after Mr. Villard's call to action was accord finally reached, with World Peaceways, Inc., stubbornly dissenting. The first draft, of course, had suffered brutal mutilation. What now emerged was a fragment four paragraphs long and wide enough to placate everyone from New York to Tokyo—except Mrs. Sternberger of World Peaceways.

From a militant rebuke of Japanese aggression the manifesto had been transformed into a plea for "peace by agreement in the Far East." While it approved participation in the then impending Brussels meeting, the statement stressed the necessity of "economic readjustments to improve the standard of living of all peoples." The crisis was not quite over. An innocent New York *Times* reporter committed the fatal error of interpreting the statement as support for non-enforcement of the neutrality law. Everyone reached for his pen. The isolationist signers felt compelled to issue an independent statement explaining their position. Mrs. Sternberger wrote a letter of her own to the President, explaining why her signature had been missing from the manifesto. Dr. Van Kirk swiftly dispatched a special-delivery letter to the editor of the *Times*. He also sent a letter to each member of the conference describing the tragic misunderstanding. By October 27 pens had been laid aside and quiet finally restored on all major fronts. The Far Eastern crisis was virtually at an end for the N. P. C. Not since the war began has the conference summoned its Far Eastern advisory committee into session.

It was easier to relegate the Spanish war to oblivion. Few conference members seem haunted by the suspicion that the war in Spain has any bearing on world peace. While they deplore the spectacle, they don't say much about it, and they wish that others would be less insistent. In the minutes of the conference for the past six months I found literally no mention of the Spanish struggle.

Having so plainly delimited its interest in the Far East, the conference obviously does not enjoy any reference to the Japanese boycott. Its most decisive action on this project was taken on December 6—months after the boycott had flowered into a full-fledged movement

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under independent auspices. On that day the conference voted to distribute a memorandum to its members listing arguments for and against the boycott. While growing sections of popular opinion throughout the world have turned to it as a means of checking aggression, many of the peace leaders vigorously condemn the boycott as "breeding the war spirit," as a "violent" technique. They contend with equal vehemence that it is "impracticable" and "ineffective." Having reached this verdict, they resume their plea for immediate universal disarmament and international good-will, hoping that George Lansbury will fix things up with Hitler.

Underlying this disdain for the boycott is a more sinister current of despair. It can be detected in almost every major peace leader; it was evident many months ago at a time when the chances were better for halting aggression. Even before Hitler's recent defiant acts the American peace leaders were privately—and publicly—abandoning hope that anything could be done to avert a major European conflict. "When that war breaks out," one peace leader told me more than a month ago, "we may all be united again." He should be cheered by recent developments. Perhaps the retreat from Europe can soon be openly proclaimed.

With the subject of actual war tabled by agreement, the peace leaders still felt that something had to be done —if only to keep up everyone's spirits. The momentous Campaign for World Economic Cooperation, now staging its climactic conference in Washington, served their purpose. It has no immediate bearing upon contemporary conflicts. It is shrouded in generalities of the most amiable sort. It points to a Way Out which everyone can hail and no one is likely to follow. It proves that men, in the darkest hours, can still write long-range programs.

The words "economic cooperation" have a soothing effect on the peace movement. No one can be opposed to the concept. No one can deny the desirability of the Hull trade program. What is ironic is that the best minds of the peace societies are now gathered in Washington to discuss "economic readjustment" while Hitler gets his "appeasement" without any formality. In recognizing the relationship between economics and war the societies are simply ten years too late—a time schedule to which they faithfully adhere.

The campaign has been progressing quietly since last fall, oblivious of any jarring political realities and exhibiting no undue hostility toward the profit system. It has been adopted as the "year-round" program of many of the local peace agencies, thus taking their minds off vexing foreign aggressions. Although the campaign was originally conceived as an effort to probe the economic causes of war, such disturbing realities as economic imperialism, inherent pressures for expansion within the profit system, and the need for reorganizing our domestic economy have been overlooked or soft-pedaled.

A preliminary report which will be presented to the Washington conference by an advisory committee of economists may prove momentarily distressing to the delegates. This report skilfully challenges the economics of isolationism. It debunks the transfer of colonies as an "appeasement" move. It then proceeds to urge such desirable measures as reduction of tariff barriers, trade agreements, and suppression of quota systems. It specifically recommends alteration of the present neutrality law. Discussing the economic proposals, the document wistfully reminds the delegates:

> Recommendations like ours have been made before. . . . Why have such recommendations not been fully carried out? How account for the great divergence between the proposals of experts and the action of statesmen? . . .
>
> We have been asked to plan the strategy for one very important sector of the fight—the direct attack on international economic problems in particular—but we must point out that our recommendations are not guaranteed to give results, in fact can hardly be applied at all unless intelligent and determined action is taken simultaneously on other fronts. . . .
>
> It is almost hopeless to expect practical application even of the immediate program we have suggested so long as statesmen are confronted by a continuous menace of war, with no security except their own military and economic preparedness.

In these gentle words the economists have quietly asked the delegates what they are doing in Washington. Few of them will get the point. Undaunted by reality, they will wrangle and split hairs over an economic program for a dream world. The program that finally emerges from the conference may be either so innocuous as to be meaningless or so gentle in its solicitude for the "have-nots" that Hitler's invasion of Austria will appear an inevitable step toward economic cooperation through a customs union. What will not emerge—except over the prostrate bodies of half the peace leaders—is any program of economic action designed to check aggressors. Neither economic sanctions nor trade embargos will be seriously considered. Whoever mentions the Japanese boycott will receive ugly looks. If by the time the resolutions committee meets it is too late to stop aggressors, discussion will be simplified. Having adjourned, the delegates will be able to file their decisions for reference use after the next war.

That the peace societies have circulated some valuable economic information is beyond dispute. They profess to do much more. They look on themselves as the spokesmen of enlightened opinion, as ministers without portfolio or prejudice. But when they get together, the shades are quietly drawn. The National Peace Conference assembled on the day after Hitler's speech to the Reichstag, which foreshadowed the doom of Austria, on the day after Eden's resignation, which provoked a crisis in Britain. The delegates remained in session for several hours. They planned the Campaign for World Economic Cooperation, listened to a report on developments in Washington, weighed matters of fiscal policy, debated whether admirals should be permitted to speak on civilian affairs. During that solemn meeting there was one parenthetical reference to the events of the week-end. One of the elder stateswomen timidly asked whether Hitler's address and Eden's resignation were likely to

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alter the European situation. She was assured by one of the conference's experts that any judgment was premature. The delegates then turned their attention to more vital matters.

In these episodes the plight of the peace societies may be sorrowfully discerned. As the European struggle sharpens, the heads of the peace leaders turn from side to side as if they were watching a tennis match. A growing pessimism grips them; they find relief in an occasional excursion into an economic Utopia.

Whether a more realistic and more effective peace movement will eventually emerge depends first of all upon the time factor—upon the interim before war in Europe. It also depends in great measure upon the appearance of an integrated, internationalist peace program in labor's ranks—there are few signs of this today but it may appear tomorrow, if there is a tomorrow. Certainly labor's contribution has vitalized the peace movement in Britain. It depends in largest degree on the outcome of the wars in Spain and China—wars which the orthodox peace societies have tried to forget.

That the peace leaders have been confronted by complex and swift-moving events which have presented them with difficult alternatives is granted. It is, in fact, the enormous import of contemporary crises which so brutally caricatures their deeds. For when the facts are added and weighed, the behavior of the peace societies must appear tragically unreal. The future does not belong to the austere Carnegie Endowment or the spiritualized Fellowship of Reconciliation or the peace-minded W. C. T. U. It may still be protected by an articulate popular opinion which fashions its own instruments of resistance to aggression, which rejects the mirage of isolation and grasps an identity with the aspirations of international labor.

[*Part I of this article appeared last week.*]

The Decline of Dave Beck

BY SELDEN C. MENEFEE

Seattle, March 11

THE Seattle elections of March 8 were hailed by the press of the nation as a swing toward conservatism in a city heretofore dominated by labor and the New Deal. It is true that the conservative councilman Arthur Langlie was elected mayor, and that a bevy of conservatives and reactionaries were swept into office at the same time. But it is also true that in spite of the split in labor's ranks Lieutenant Governor Victor A. Meyers, running on a New Deal platform and indorsed by the C. I. O. and more than twenty progressive A. F. of L. unions, received 48,114 out of a total of 127,111 votes. Moreover, the councilmanic candidates of the Washington Commonwealth Federation, Michael Smith and James Sullivan, who were opposed as "subversive" by the reactionary executive board of the Central Labor Council, polled twice the vote of the federation's candidates in the 1937 primaries, and received more than 43,000 votes in the final election. In another year, given a more united labor movement and a measure of disillusionment with the conservative regime, the progressive forces may well win a majority.

The real significance of the elections, however, was that they were a milestone in the decline of Dave Beck, West Coast teamster czar. Beck's candidate, Mayor John F. Dore, was ingloriously defeated in the primary election of February 21 by Langlie and Meyers. Though Dore had carried on a vicious red-baiting campaign, and a force of 2,000 teamsters checked the voting books and dragged voters to the polls, the returns showed that a considerable proportion of the A. F. of L. membership voted for Meyers.

Dore said upon taking office in 1936 that Beck had been the most important factor in his election and that he was going to pay Beck back if it was the last thing he ever did. At first he tried to straddle the fence, declaring that Dave Beck and Harry Bridges were "the two greatest friends I ever had," but when it came to an issue he was forced to join the A. F. of L. forces. As Beck's tactics became more and more high-handed, it was evident that Dore's choice might well put an end to his political career.

For the past year Dore has been Beck's strong right arm in the political field. Even the Chamber of Commerce was forced to bow before this combination and to play ball with Beck in what is euphemistically called "Seattle's model labor plan." In the strikes of the C. I. O. Newspaper Guild, fur workers, and warehousemen the police were used virtually as pickets for the teamsters. A teamster "goon squad" in a car bearing the license plate of Claude O'Reilly, teamster business agent and president of the Central Labor Council, assaulted a crippled newsboy who opposed the A. F. of L. regime. C. I. O. fuel-truck drivers were beaten, and one fuel yard which dared to deal with them was bombed. A cleaning and dyeing shop which refused to pay 3 per cent of its gross income to the "association" run by Beck's ally William Short was wrecked by a "mysterious" explosion. Yet the police took no action.

These occurrences did not help Dore politically, and in an attempt to regain favor he turned to that last resource of the politician without an issue—red-baiting. The Communist Party had obtained the use of the Civic Auditorium for a mass-meeting on November 10 to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Russian Revolution. At the last moment Dore ordered the lease can-

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celed. John Caughlan, Secretary of the American Civil Liberties Union, took the case to court without avail. The American Legion had volunteered to use force if necessary to keep the reds out of the auditorium, and Dore told the court that his action was taken to avoid bloodshed. The meeting was not held. But for Dore the incident backfired when the conservative New Order of Cincinnatus condemned him on the ground that they too were a political minority group and feared similar treatment.

As the election approached, Dore's supporters again used the red scare. Harry H. Lewis, former American Legion commander and strike-breaker, charged that "Vic" Meyers was receiving the support of "Communists scheming to seize control of the city government." Lewis said: "It is difficult for Seattle citizens, good Americans, to believe, but it is true that these Communist termites already have bored into some labor unions, into your schools, your churches, and even your homes. Their policy is the sitdown strike, the picketing of hospitals and cemeteries. Do you want to turn the city government over to their ghoulishness, or retain a loyal American, Mayor Dore?" But the ancient red herring had been so overworked that it did Dore little good. The public, knowing his record, could not take him seriously as a crusader for Americanism, and the chief effect of this propaganda was to disgust the average voter with both sides.

In Seattle, as in Detroit, the split in labor encouraged the middle-class voter to say "a plague o' both your houses." With the A. F. of L. leaders labeled "racketeers" and the progressive union forces "Communists," the middle-of-the-roaders bolted into the camp of Langlie, who promised them clean, economical government. Langlie, although backed by the Order of Cincinnatus and the Chamber of Commerce, has at least promised to uphold the Wagner Act and to be impartial in labor disputes. This will represent a distinct gain to the C. I. O. compared with the methods of the Beck-Dore administration.

The defeat of Dore is merely the latest of a series of blows which Dave Beck has received in recent months. The first sign of a breach in his power came last September when his teamsters' union demanded a showdown with the C. I. O. longshoremen and warehousemen in San Francisco. William Green had handed Beck paper jurisdiction over all the inland warehousemen organized by the longshoremen. This led to a series of disputes, which culminated in Beck's order to his teamsters to blockade the waterfront until the warehousemen should be handed over by the longshoremen. The plan broke down when the longshoremen fraternized with the pickets and used loud-speakers to explain to them the silliness of the whole situation. The teamster rank and file then refused to follow Beck's orders and the blockade ceased to function.

The most serious assault upon Beck's rule was the arrest by Oregon police of more than fifty teamster and A. F. of L. "goons" who were using the same tactics that had gone unpunished in Seattle. These thugs admitted that they had plotted to bomb a tugboat hauling C. I. O. logs and had bombed non-union cleaning shops and wrecked trucks driven by members of the brewery workers' union. The most serious charge was brought against Al Rosser, Portland teamster chief, accused of arson in connection with a $130,000 fire at an "unfair" box factory in Salem, Oregon.

Unfortunately the teamsters' methods have laid the entire labor movement open to attack. Charles Martin, Oregon's reactionary governor, with complete lack of logic has drawn the moral that the arrests—of A. F. of L. men—prove that the C. I. O. and the NLRB should be driven out of Oregon. When John L. Lewis recently said that he might come to Portland, Governor Martin remarked that Lewis would get a "warm reception" if he did. "It would be a good idea for him to stay out of the state," said this former army general. The Governor also charged that Lewis and Charles Hope, regional NLRB representative, were conspiring to defeat him in the coming elections. Thus under cover of a drive against the A. F. of L. "goons" a fight against all unions is under way. The struggle is reflected in the federal government's refusal to allow Harold Pritchett, a Canadian who is president of the C. I. O. International Woodworkers' Association, to live in the United States, and in the current agitation to deport Harry Bridges.

Beck suffered another major defeat when he tried to annex the drivers of brewery trucks, who have traditionally belonged to the industrially organized A. F. of L. brewery workers. Beck refused to haul beer made in California or the East, where the brewery workers refused to bow to Beck's rule. His action gave local brewers a monopoly of the Northwest market, and a series of court orders recently forced him to abandon this policy, which was clearly in restraint of trade.

Still another blow came in February when the eight-months-old strike of the Newspaper Guild against the Seattle *Star* ended in a complete victory for the Guild. A boycott supported by a majority of the rank and file of Seattle labor turned the trick, in spite of Beck's active opposition, Dore's police, and the A. F. of L. campaign for *Star* subscriptions. Last December the management was still defiant enough to appeal from a NLRB decision in favor of the Guild, but by February it had to sue for peace. It got peace only by granting over $29,000 in full back wages to the strikers, preferential hiring through the Guild, no "economy firings" for at least six months, the five-day forty-hour week, severance pay up to fifteen weeks' wages, and other concessions.

The final and crushing blow was the defeat of Beck and Dore in the Seattle primaries, with its repercussions within the A. F. of L. After the primaries the fire-fighters and several other conservative unions deserted the teamsters to support Meyers and the Washington Commonwealth Federation slate. A few more such defeats might completely wreck Beck's hold on the local A. F. of L. machine, and then labor might once more be united. The logical conclusion to draw from all this is that public opinion is still an important factor in the field of labor as in politics, and will continue to be as long as we have a democracy. The Becks and the Dores who lose sight of this fact are finding that their days are numbered.

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Issues and Men

BY OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

LISTEN, my children, and you shall hear on all sides the words that we must fight, and fight soon, in Europe, ere it is too late. The gangsters abroad are triumphant. The columnists at home are in a panic. Dorothy Thompson, for whom I have only deep affection and admiration, thinks we must "wake up and live," that the pistol is at our own throats, and that if we and the other democracies do not move *now* it will be the end of everything, the engulfing of the world in a tidal wave of bestial suppression of everything that men have held dear for centuries. The news from Austria has horrified every thinking man and woman, everybody with a conscience. The country has been made over into a hell of hate, prejudice, vicious cruelty, sadism. A famous Vienna correspondent has just said over the transoceanic telephone that all Austria is one horrible prison-house of Jews and anti-Nazis. The number of the wholesale suicides can never even be estimated, and they are only beginning. We may well ask whether a new Dark Age has not actually arrived.

If I could only feel that more war would cure this and save us and civilization I should be willing to say: "Let the struggle come now." Or if I felt, with Dorothy Thompson, that a world war was inevitable I might be tempted to say: "Let's begin it and have it over with and know our fate." But believing as I do that, whether we win or lose, a world war will destroy democracy—the very thing we are proposing to save—my mind rejects this impossible remedy. We might just as well accept the new and horrible ideas and resign ourselves as best we can to the fact that the world for generations to come will be a worse hell than anyone has yet painted. When I say this to friends who want us to fight now—"ere it is too late"—they say that there is no other way out, that we shall have to risk coming out of the struggle fascist or communist. As one put it to me, "Your way we shall drift into war"; to which I replied: "Take your way and we *run* into war and lose our democracy and our institutions, and lose them at the cost of suffering beside which that of the World War will seem like a pleasant picnic."

That we shall lose our democracy admits of no argument whatever. Just read the May bill now before Congress, so strongly urged by the American Legion, and see for yourselves. It subordinates every individual, every business to the President's will; it does *not* conscript wealth or adequately limit profits as it pretends, but it may draft the worker as well as the soldier. It would give to President Roosevelt all those autocratic powers his bitterest enemies charge him with desiring, and if he gets these in war time there is little chance that they will be returned to the Congress and the people when the war is over. But even without the May bill we should still come out of the war a fascist state, for it is of the essence of war that the evils you seek to destroy by it are not destroyed but enter into your own life.

To some that may sound fantastic but it is true. The deluded American people were willing to go to war against Spain in 1898 because they were horrified by the Spanish concentration camps and the tortures to which captured Cubans and Filipinos were subjected. Professor William G. Summer of Yale predicted as we went to war that we should learn to do the very things against which we were protesting. Within two years we were herding the Filipinos into concentration camps where they suffered no end, and more than seventy-five officers and men of our army were tried and punished for administering the frightful water-cure torture to Filipino prisoners! In 1917 we went to war to defeat the German militarists, and all the world has become militaristic to an unheard-of degree. We went to war to oppose dictatorships and autocracies, and now, after less than twenty years, civilization is in danger of perishing at the hands of dictators, and democracy everywhere has its back to the wall. How can anyone question that to defeat communism and Nazism on the field of battle we shall have to adopt every single one of their measures of regimentation?

"Then you would submit?" I am asked. No. Not without every moral protest, not without non-violent resistance—such as boycotts and non-intercourse—and, as a paradox, not without non-resistance. In the face of the greatest piling up of military and naval force the world has ever seen, which has made it unsafe as never before, I still believe that those who take up the sword shall perish by it and that the most powerful influence in the world is still non-resistance. Undoubtedly most people who read these words will say: "He's crazier than ever." Perhaps. But I am surely not much crazier than those who are so certain that if they go to war the democracies will win. Germany came near enough to winning the World War with a military machine which I believe was inferior to that of Hitler. Certainly it was not backed by such adoration as the youth of Germany have for the Nazi government. Who knows what new tactics, what devilish skill, what new weapons, what superior generals this horrible new Germany may not produce? The right always wins? Not on the field of battle. When you go to war you gamble on defeat as well as victory. The one hope for the world is the preservation of our American democracy intact. What right have we to betray the past and the future and risk its existence on the field of battle?

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BOOKS *and the* ARTS

SOCRATES DISCUSSES THE SPARTANS*

BY ARNOLD HOELLRIEGEL

[*The following imaginary dialogue, set in Athens before the Spartans overwhelmed it, appeared in the Vienna newspaper* Der Tag *a few weeks before the Spartan Nazis overran Austria. The author is a prominent German journalist.* Der Tag *has now been suppressed, and Dr. Hoellriegel's arrest has been reported from Vienna.*]

ON THAT day the friends were unable to stroll as usual on the lawns of the Academy or the Lyceum and continue their talks. These pleasant gardens the philosophers loved so well were outside the city walls and had of late been made unsafe by the Spartan patrol.

Luckily the home of Ion, the famous rhapsodist, at the top of the Hill of the Nymphs, had a lovely little garden from which one could look across to the Acropolis and see the ivory and gold statue of Athena Promachos shining in the sun. Here, by a shadowed and meandering pathway adorned with statues, Socrates and his companions sat today, too sad and confused to pay any attention to the beautiful scene.

This was in truth the day of doom for Athens. All was now over. The party in the interior of the country which had for a long time been negotiating secretly with the Lacedaemonians was about to establish a dictatorship and was recalling home those among the emigrants who shared its opinions. It was the end of Athenian liberty, the end of the grandeur and the beauty of the city. The small and defenseless company who had remained loyal found it particularly ominous that Kritias, the renegade disciple of Socrates, had joined the new overlords. They sorely missed Alcibiades, the proud and handsome friend whose statesmanship and energy might have kept Kritias in line. The insensate demogogues of the democratic party had driven Alcibiades into banishment. How they needed him now!

"This is the end!" said Ion, their host. "The walls of Athens will be razed to the ground; its fleet will be burned; they may, who knows, turn the Parthenon into a quarry. Perhaps they will use the theater of Dionysos as a drill ground or, much worse, make it echo to their barbaric war cries and wild songs."

"Please, no," Socrates said to Xenophon, "Put away your writing block; forgo your custom of writing down what we say. The occasion is not suitable. And you too, dear Plato. I beg you not to do it. I am a sculptor. I know how ugly is the face distorted with sadness and anguish. Why preserve such a likeness? Let us rather look upon that which is beautiful." With his hairy hand —for he too was ugly—he pointed at the marble statue of a naked boy which stood in front of him.

"Perhaps we Athenians have looked too much upon what is beautiful," the stocky Xenophon said. He had been a soldier by profession, and though he had opposed the Spartans as valorously as Socrates himself he was unable to suppress a certain admiration for the enemy.

"One cannot vanquish an enemy," observed the young Erixymachos, who, true Athenian that he was, had to scoff even at such a time; "one cannot vanquish an enemy whose food at home consists of black-bean soup and who must force his way into foreign countries with his iron lance because they will not accept his iron money."

Socrates stroked his unattractive beard. "Your observations are unbecoming," he said, "because it is a mistake to scorn an enemy; we must discover a way to overcome him instead and turn his victory to defeat." He turned to the rhapsodist Ion, the owner of the garden. "You, dear Ion, will you not tell me whom these beautiful statues in your laurel walk represent—this young lad who lets his torch sink to the ground and this nude boy with wings?" Socrates, being a sculptor himself, naturally knew that the unhappy lad with the extinguished torch was Thanatos, the god of death, and the naked boy, Eros, the god of love. But everyone was used to Socrates's habit of asking questions, and Ion readily and without surprise gave the answer.

"Now," continued Socrates, "will you perhaps tell me which is mightier, Eros or Thanatos?"

Ion looked down. "Until now we Athenians hoped it was Eros. But it would appear that death is stronger than love. How else could Athens now lie vanquished while Sparta stands over her, victorious!"

"So you believe," Socrates continued, "that the Spartans have made an alliance with the gods of death and we Athenians with the forces which stand for life and love?"

"It is surely so," Ion said with a sigh. "The Spartans do not love life but only death. That is why death is on their side."

"And life on ours," Socrates added.

He lifted his hand lightly. In the direction in which he pointed rose the white columns of the Parthenon. The golden shimmer of the helmet of Athena Promachos was visible between the somber poplars of the Acropolis.

"All that will live because Eros is on its side," Socrates said.

*Translated by Samuel R. Wachtell.

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He turned to the weather-beaten soldier, Xenophon, who, grim visaged, stood near him. "And you, Xenophon, what do you think? Why are we inferior to the Spartans?"

"Because they are tougher than we," he answered grimly. "Because our boys learned how to laugh and to play, but theirs learned how to march and throw the lance; because our youths thought about festive parades and the laughter of girls, while theirs learned how to endure heroically the leader's lash and how to become tougher and more hardened; because Athens produced the most beautiful singers and the Spartans the cruelest judges, the most tireless generals; because we listened to the comedies of Aristophanes, who mocked at our country, and because we joined in his mockery; because Sparta is ruled by ruthless kings who must fear for their lives if victory should elude them, while we hand over our government to the smooth orators on the Agora and to those who promise the populace the lowest taxes and the easiest military service."

"And so," Socrates asked, "in your opinion he always wins who holds life in the greatest contempt? In that case, to be sure, the Spartans must defeat the Athenians; but must not the barbarians, by the same token, vanquish the Spartans? For the latter are, after all, Greeks. They do not feed on raw meat and wear animal pelts for raiment like the barbarians of the North. They also enjoy the warm sun of Hellas; and even if they tomorrow put the flaming torch to the Acropolis, this glorious blue sea will be before their eyes. How could they who are Greeks utterly renounce Eros in favor of Thanatos?"

The companions of Socrates were silent. They could think of no answer to his question. He gazed about him as if looking for someone. His eyes finally came to rest on the sensitive face of young Plato.

"You, Plato, who have thought so deeply on the nature of the state, do you also believe that the state should abandon virtue in favor of efficiency and barter wisdom for success; that in alliance with Thanatos it should wage war upon Eros because the end of all things, the ultimate achievement, is not joy and life but death?"

"That I do not know," Plato answered. He drew a corner of his robe over his face, then continued, "I only know that tomorrow the Spartans, if they be so minded, could flog you and me to death; or they could send us to the lead mines as slaves; or, as rumor already has it, destroy democracy in Athens, not, as I could wish, in order to establish a government by virtuous men and philosophers, but to erect the most wretched form of rule, the tyranny of coarse minds and degraded souls. Forgive me, Socrates, if among the latter I include your pupil Kritias, for what tyrant thinks on a meaner level than a renegade philosopher?"

Plato became silent. At his despairing outburst it seemed for a moment as if the company were about to rebel against the serenity of the master. Agathon thought of Alcibiades, the friend of his youth, now a wandering exile, and wept shamelessly. Perhaps he was already dead.

"He also was a valiant warrior," Agathon sobbed, "but he loved life and freedom and beauty; arm in arm with Eros he battled with death, and so he was doomed to perish!"

"Would you not rather perish like Alcibiades, the Athenian, than live like Lysander, the Spartan?" asked Socrates gently. "And whom will posterity mention oftener do you think—this victor or us, the vanquished, whom he may tomorrow sell into slavery? It is true Thanatos vouchsafes victory to his own, but the laurel wreaths with which he adorns their heads wither at his dreadful touch. Athens may perish, but the ruins of the Acropolis will in the end prevail over the Spartans and over their efficiency and over their strictest drill-masters and over the tyrants they now plan to put over us."

Silence descended upon the company. Unconsciously Ion sounded a few bars on the lyre which lay near him on the stone bench. The friends of Socrates recognized the melody from the chorus of the "Antigone" of Sophocles, who had only recently died: "O Eros, undefeated in battle . . ."

BOOKS

Life of Bakunin

MICHAEL BAKUNIN. By E. H. Carr. The Macmillan Company. $6.50.

THIS is the first English biography of Michael Bakunin, the great European revolutionary of the last century, contemporary and both spiritual friend and enemy of Karl Marx. The author, professor of international politics in the University College of Wales, gives a thorough account of events, but the life of Bakunin is missing, though it would be illuminating for the student of the eighteenth century and its consequences today. The present impasse between economic efficiency and individual liberty was pre-lived and pre-suffered by Bakunin. He found no way out, he contradicted himself, but almost a hundred years ago he posed the all-important problems of today. Of this his biographer gives us little.

Professor Carr's research habit, however, has its merits. He went through all the sources; his knowledge of languages enabled him to study the documents in the original. He follows Bakunin step by step from Russia to Germany, Switzerland, France, through the revolts of 1848, into the Saxon, Austrian, Russian prisons. He flees with him from Siberia. He follows him in his struggle to create the first international labor movement, in the Franco-German War, through the days of the Commune, and in his expulsion from the First International. He watches his tragic retreat from political life, stands at his grave, and reads the police record in which the great anti-bourgeois was entered as "Michel de Bakounine, rentier." Place in this span of time and space a vivid personality with a frustrated sex life, and you will understand why daily reviewers have labeled the book "as exciting as a novel."

The author tries hard to catch up with the quick traveler Bakunin, to make his acquaintance. Unfortunately, he seldom succeeds. He notes everything Bakunin said, taking occasional remarks and exaggerations as seriously as utterances

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well thought through; he reads every line of Bakunin's writings, often judging drafts and finished works alike; he explores his private life, and often defends him against gossip, but he never learns to understand him. After you have swallowed all the facts he spreads before you, you may well feel that Bakunin, one of the outstanding representatives of revolutionary thought, was just another radical fool. The English objectivity of the author leads him to express such a judgment when he adheres to the smug nonsense that "Bakunin is one of the completest embodiments in history of the spirit of liberty—the liberty which excludes neither license nor caprice, which tolerates no human institution, which remains an unrealized and unrealizable ideal, but which is almost universally felt to be an indispensable part of the highest manifestations and aspirations of humanity."

As long as Professor Carr describes the one part of Bakunin's life which he is able to understand, his youth, he does a good piece of historical reporting. The first hundred pages of his work, on Bakunin's first twenty-nine years, make interesting reading. Michael Bakunin, son of an old aristocrat, the owner of five hundred serfs, and a very young mother, was the third of ten children. Two girls, then Michael, then two girls, five boys—note the strategic position! He dominates the sisters by virtue of his sex and the brothers by virtue of seniority. A perfect set-up for a Freudian study, and it is indeed difficult to understand why it has not yet been done. Bakunin's love for his sister Tatiana, his insistence on breaking up the marriage of another sister, his impotency, and many other queer trends of his personality should be a feast for the psychoanalyst. But the historian was out to explore the completest embodiment of the spirit of liberty. He starts well with Bakunin's romantic period, the influence of Fichte, Hegel, Schelling on his thinking, his associations with the "Jung Hegelianer." But his understanding stops when Bakunin decides with Goethe, "Ich bin zu alt um nur zu spielen, zu jung, um ohne Wunsch zu sein," and leaves idealistic philosophy for politics. From this moment on the author does not see the forest for the trees.

The profound necessity which drives the honest Russian aristocrat on his strenuous way from all-embracing, meaningless, but high-sounding idealistic principles to the stern and bitter reality of Marx's class struggle is not understood. Why Bakunin became an enemy of Marx's "state communism," as he called the authoritarian trend which Marx foresaw for the transitional period between capitalism and the classless society, is only superficially explained. It is not shown how Bakunin was more tainted by the exploited watchmakers of the Jura Mountains than they by him. The author does not see Bakunin as the representative of the hearty primitive revolutionism of the poorest. And the able retelling of the thrilling events of Bakunin's life does not compensate for such serious lacks. We look in vain for an explanation of Bakunin's influence, which reaches into the present. Why he became a "legend" even in his lifetime remains a riddle.

Franz Mehring in his biography of Marx says: "History will assure Bakunin, in spite of all his faults and weaknesses, a place of honor among the fighters of the international proletariat, however much this place may be disputed as long as there are philistines on this earth." The historian Carr does not dispute Bakunin his place of honor; he does not know that Bakunin occupies it. His work will serve in many respects as a very useful compilation of material for the still missing Bakunin biography. His attempt is as precise as a time table, and it tells little more about an exceptional and important historic personality than a time table tells about the complexity of a railroad.

FRANZ HOELLERING

History of a Spot

A PRAIRIE GROVE. By Donald Culross Peattie. Simon and Schuster. $2.50.

FOR telling the story of a few obscure acres in northern Illinois Mr. Peattie has at least one indispensable qualification: he knows that the flat land of the Middle West is interesting, and can say why. Trippers from the East and West who ask what anybody sees in it are rarely answered, even by those who see everything. Mr. Peattie's answer is simple.

> It requires a love of it deeply to read the slight configuration of this land. . . . Only gradually the lingerer grows conscious of fine shadings, of great meanings in slight symbols. At last he can hear the great voice that speaks softly; he can see the swell and fall upon the flank of a statue carved out in a whole continent's marble.

To love a thing is not necessarily to be as articulate about it as Mr. Peattie is about Goodner's Grove, the spot of prairie whose history he has decided to tell. But the attachment must come first, and those who share this with Mr. Peattie will be grateful to him for the words which in his case have come as a matter of course.

His grove, which by the earliest men in Illinois was thought of and spoken of as an island in a sea of grass, an island that tilted and floated on misty days, has to begin with a pre-human history. Mr. Peattie's first effort is to reconstruct the fauna and flora of the place before men were there with arrows or guns or wheels. And nothing from that time interests him more than the grass. It was not timothy or bluegrass, it was nothing European. It was taller than a man on horseback, and it must have believed that it was tough enough, root and stem, to stand forever. Of course it was not.

> The plowshare, resisted, tossed, dulled, lying weary on its side while the men rested, drove on after a long breath, devouring an aboriginal purity. It went shearing through the juicy roots of the prairie clover, and clove the sunflower tubers through the meat. With every yard it gained, it ended grass empire. It turned the old campus of the buffalo under, and evicted the deer mice and the meadow mice, the voles and the spermophiles. They would come back and fatten in the wheat stubble, but every year now they would be turned out again.

That was after the white men, not much more than a century ago, came from New England with the desire burning in them to dry this green land up. They did so, with the result that it helps now to support a nation, and probably does not remember that it once fed a host of wild animals—of which only the rodents survive.

Mr. Peattie is far from saying that the men should not have come, for the human history of his grove is perhaps three-fourths of his subject matter. He takes account of the Indian, who "had found his place in that fauna; he wasted not, neither did he defile." And before the men from New England there were the French explorers, who may or may not deserve credit for leaving the land exactly as they found it; they were political failures who in time, given success, would have converted the prairie into fields. The first half of the book, indeed, is but a preparation for the arrival of Mr. Peattie's own forebears. It lays out in our imagination a limitless grassy and watery world, a luxurious wild kingdom of aboriginal flowers, rose-breasted passenger pigeons, and furry quadrupeds; it makes us at home in a universe which contains no people of the modern kind; then here they

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come, their wagons creaking, their pots and kettles rattling, their children and fiddles crying, their chickens complaining in their coops, their bacon and coffee perfuming the air, and the voices of their men shouting "Gee there! or "So-o-oh!" to yoked oxen from the East. It is as if a strange race had rushed in from nowhere. Yet they are there still, and they have never been strange. "They have somehow not found their way into romance and sentiment, for they are not a vanished people, or a defeated people." They are simply Midwesterners; and this book will do for their romance.

MARK VAN DOREN

Mr. Scherman's Promises

THE PROMISES MEN LIVE BY: A NEW APPROACH TO ECONOMICS. By Harry Scherman. Random House. $3.

IT IS very difficult to be patient with an author who pumps his readers full of reactionary doctrine under the guise of enlightening them with indisputable truth. And that is precisely what Mr. Scherman does.

For two hundred pages or so Mr. Scherman demonstrates at wearisome length (1) that modern capitalism functions through contractual relationships, (2) that most contracts are not settled at the same time they are entered into ("the promises men live by"), and (3) that in the long run a very high proportion of the debts so contracted are discharged in full. So much, it may be admitted, *is* indisputable.

From this point Mr. Scherman's reasoning runs somewhat as follows. Contracts are settled in money. But what we *use for money* consists in a lot more promises to pay, this time promises by banks (notes and deposits). These in turn he traces back to government promises to pay. Pay what? Why, gold, of course; the law says as much. From this the conclusion is deduced that the whole network of promises on which the functioning of the economy depends rests in the final analysis on the willingness of the government at all times to discharge its promises in gold. "If the government's promise is not fulfilled down to the last grain of gold demanded, disaster befalls!"

Now Mr. Scherman knows that this is nonsense, because he has seen almost all the countries in the world refuse to fulfil promises to pay in gold (that is, go off the gold standard) in the last decade, and he is surely not unaware of the fact that disaster *preceded* these refusals rather than followed them. He therefore is driven to invent the doctrine that these dishonored promises continue to function as money only because people expect that some day governments and central banks will again resume meeting them in gold. "This is the solid core, the real value, back of our newly vaunted modern 'managed currencies.' It is gold, and the expectation of somehow, somewhen, receiving gold."

The full truth of the matter is unfortunately not so simple; but the essential facts can be briefly stated. People use for money—and what they use for money *is* money—anything that is generally acceptable in settlement of contracts; in other words money is *generalized purchasing power*. Its value depends upon its quantity and speed of turnover relative to the relevant variables on the side of production and distribution of goods and services. Under modern conditions bank deposits form by far the largest proportion of money, and their quantity can be controlled within fairly narrow limits by the action of central banks and governments. *Convertibility into gold is one criterion which central banks and governments may use in deciding how much money to create.* Its only justification, however, is historical precedent. We have perhaps not yet reached a state of affairs in which gold can be entirely dispensed with in international transactions, but there is scarcely a reputable economist who would advocate directing internal monetary policy according to a set of strict gold-convertibility rules.

Once Mr. Scherman's view of the nature of money is disposed of, the corollaries which flow from it have to be thrown out as well. If it really were true that a dollar is essentially the promise of the government to pay one thirty-fifth of an ounce of gold, then it would follow that any failure to meet that promise in whole or in part—as, for example, by devaluation—would constitute a flagrant breach of contract, and Mr. Scherman would be at least partially justified in ranting at the dishonesty of governments. But as soon as it is realized that this "promise-to-pay-gold" aspect of modern money is nothing but a legalistic anachronism, Mr. Scherman's rage appears as silly as it in fact is.

The hard-money fallacy is unquestionably the most fertile source of reactionary counsel in Mr. Scherman's book. There are plenty of others, however. For example, taxation is regarded as essentially seizure of property, and an unbalanced budget is both dangerous and reprehensible. But perhaps the most pernicious of all is Mr. Scherman's teaching about the state. The state, he says, is the whole community, and its powers arise from the will of the people. Our rulers (the government), who are uniformly a miserable and dishonest lot, are merely those who "fashion, guide, and take advantage of" the will of the people. From this it follows that the faults of government are essentially the faults of the community, and consequently no improvement can be expected until the community has reached a high level of understanding. The only way to build a better world, therefore, is to educate the people in sound economics—Mr. Scherman's brand, of course. All attempts to proceed along other lines are either futile or dangerous, or both. That this doctrine plays straight into the hands of tory reaction is obvious on the face of it.

Mr. Scherman has given the best popular exposition of the mechanism of the banking system that I have seen anywhere. It is a pity that his very considerable powers of exposition are not being placed in the service of a more worthy cause.

PAUL M. SWEEZY

The Brilliance of E. E. Cummings

COLLECTED POEMS. By E. E. Cummings. A Selection with an Introduction by the Author. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $3.

TULIPS AND CHIMNEYS. By E. E. Cummings. Archetype Edition of the Original MS. Mt. Vernon: Golden Eagle Press. $7.50.

SEVEN POEMS. By E. E. Cummings. Read by the Author. New York: Decca Records. $2.50.

TWO characteristics of the extraordinary poetry of E. E. Cummings solidly set it in the category of the modern. Of the two, the less important is his verse's external similarity to the work of the fauve and cubist painters and sculptors. This similarity is the consequence primarily of its numerous formal and lingual distortions, themselves the result of necessary and frequently successful readjustments, like the fauves' and the cubists', of traditional molds

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Professor Lips is now head of the Anthropology department at Howard University. His wife has written, in the story of their exile, one of the most overwhelming indictments yet published of the Nazi regime, and a book that will restore faith in humanity to thousands of readers who have grown even more heartsick over the course of events in Europe in the past four weeks.

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By EVA LIPS

Translated from the German by Caroline Newton. With an introduction by Dorothy Thompson.

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to a complex experience. Cummings not only agglutinates, telescopes, and dislocates language under the pressure of emotion. A deal of his verse is cast in the forms of Petrarchian and Elizabethan sonnets broken into freely spaced fragments whose rhythmic relations and special emphases represent the impacts and movements of his sensations. To an almost equal degree the poetry's similarity with the painting and sculpture called modern flows from the circumstance of its actual parallelism of the plastic arts. Many of the poet's formal distortions are compositions of the printed page which with arrangements of the typography and organizations of the spaces stress the aural rhythms and the meanings with visual patterns. Advertising art might learn from him! And in certain instances, with varying success, the pages even form typographical pictures somewhat like Guillaume Apollinaire's *calligrammes,* and with their modest means portray, as in the little poems on the moon and the grasshopper, the aspect and movement of the orb and the shape and spring of the insect in the grasses.

The second, more important feature responsible for the poetry's position in the category of the ultra-modern is its living incorporation—to a wider extent than even the somewhat cognate expressions of T. S. Eliot and Marianne Moore—of two great disparate traditions of English verse. They are the baroque tradition of the metaphysical and "witty" poets of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries—certain of whom, Herbert in particular, also composed *calligrammes*—and the romantic tradition of the leading nineteenth-century poets. This does not mean that Cummings's verse combines the highest poetic values of both schools, or that his stature at present equals Donne's or Dryden's, Keats's or Rossetti's. It merely means that this poetry freshly combines an experience and a wit akin to the baroque poets' with an experience and a suggestiveness of language, a musicality, and an emotive tone akin to the romanticists'; and that in Cummings to a degree perhaps greater than in any other contemporary poet, we discern the force of nature, apparently unable to go farther with either the sheerly witty or the lyrical, romantic type of poet, making a third, possibly twentieth-century sort by joining elements of the other two.

What we find in his poetry is original imagery, often romantically rich and decorative, and language with a large aura of suggestivity—in the form of wit. This wit is an original association of ideas through which the essences of the objects contemplated by the poet become intelligible; and Cummings's ideas, unlike the Gongorists', happen to be sensuous and tactile. We read "through the autumn indisputably roaming / death's big rotten particular kiss"; and "the voice of your eyes is deeper than all roses) / nobody, not even the rain, has such small hands." In the eyes of his light-o'-loves he finds "a green egyptian noise." "Spring is a perhaps / Hand in a window / (carefully to / and fro moving New and Old things, while / people stare carefully / moving a perhaps / fraction of flower here placing / an inch of air there) / and / without breaking anything." "Your sex," he says, "squealed like a billiard cue / chalking itself, as not to make an error / with twists spontaneously methodical"; and "slattern of seasons," he cries, "When you sing in your whiskey-voice / the grass rises on the head of the earth / and all the trees are put on edge."

A little of the verse is trivial and some of it involved. The whole of his work diverts and dazzles as frequently as it touches and moves us. The reason seems to be that Cummings's material is composed more regularly of complexes of inordinately sharp and delicate, largely comic sensations

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and whimsical thoughts than of profound, passionate, and tender feelings. If his individual, contemporary, and American experience is erotic and romantically comprehensive of his own personality, to a degree it is cynical like the Restoration wits'. (Here we again glimpse the mixture.) Exquisitely it comprehends the sudden or the gradual emergence of erotic impulse from the unconscious; the mysterious process by which two beings are opened to each other and conjoined; the subtle changes wrought in the aspects of things by the stir of subconscious new life. None the less, it oftentimes exclusively embraces the nether and superficial powers of sensuality. And there is some morbidity in the whole of this experience together with much sweetness and exuberance; and bitterness and misanthropy, and a not quite kindly, humorous comprehension of vulgarity, and ineffectuality.

Still, no contemporary verse is more brilliant. Cummings in his mock-heroic verses marshals a cant vocabulary, images, and ceremonials which scintillantly parody their objects. Indeed, he has a mastery of comic and satiric form not unworthy of Dryden. The element of invention and surprise too is constant in his verse; and the rhythms are irregular, intricate, and dynamic, and the language has a punch. And where, as in certain gorgeous sonnets, his material is the profounder feeling, where he is drunk with beauty, his poetry has magic, ecstasy, and individually penetrating tones of the great romantic lineage. For this reason, we receive with much joy his later swelling poems with their revelation of his powers of continual self-renewal, and the commencement of companionship with sun and star.

PAUL ROSENFELD

Regular Guy

LOVE, HERE IS MY HAT. By William Saroyan. Modern Age Books. 25 cents.

REVIEWERS have made a pastime of deflating William Saroyan, while he retaliated by standing on his head in the letter columns. I don't know whether that particular aptitude helped him to recoup his losses, but my guess is that such amusing exchanges are about over now. This new collection of stories suggests that their author is gradually becoming reconciled to the view of him held by his contemporaries. Not that critical opinion has led him to take humility for his portion. Why assume a miracle when the text at hand prompts a much simpler explanation? Saroyan's *donnée* is still exclusively Saroyan, but having had his fair measure of success he can afford to give up that frantic bustle about his dark ways as a young man of a dark kind which made so many readers laugh when the apparent intention was to make them cry.

The pose of profound suffering and the exhibitionism of the "Flying Trapeze" book had its source, it seems to me, in that pseudo-defiant, hysterical resentment of society to which a lonely and frightened young man trying to "make" literature and thus achieve some kind of status in the world very often succumbs. But that sort of resentment, being superficial and functioning mostly for personal ends, usually evaporates as soon as society's scowl turns into a smile, no matter how fleeting and equivocal. At present Saroyan is discovering that "society isn't really malicious. It doesn't really single anybody out and make a monkey out of him." Why should it be gratuitous, then, to infer that Saroyan recognized is Saroyan mellowed, Saroyan genial, Saroyan with a newly acquired sense of proportion, even Saroyan modest.

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PHILIP RAHV

Shorter Notices

TOMORROW'S BREAD. By Beatrice Bisno. Liveright. $2.50.

The structural details of this book, worn thin by use, will surprise no one. The immigration graphs, particularly those showing the rising tide of Jewish influx, have already provided many a novelist with a chance to loiter tediously behind a family chronicle. Few, however, have revealed the sober discernment or steady perspective with which Miss Bisno fuses personal and national history, at the same time projecting a vivid background of industrial strife. The protagonist of her book is a Jew; stripped of the racial coloration, he emerges as the perpetual idealist common to all nations. At fifteen, Sam Kerensky is a tailor contractor, at nineteen a sweatshop proprietor with visions of wealth and independence. But the Haymarket massacre and a taste of Marx propel him out of commercial influence into union leadership. Throughout his career Sam wrestles with the questions of theory versus human beings, of workers yielding to ambition, and of union men fighting the union. His crusade to improve the needlework trades is believable and frequently touching; his disillusionment is inevitable. Along with Sam's story Miss Bisno presents a clear picture of the trade from the 80's to the boom period. "Tomorrow's Bread" received the Edwin Wolf award of $2,500 for the best novel of Jewish interest, one of the few recent literary prize-winners deserving of such honor.

NATIONAL INCOME AND CAPITAL FORMATION 1919-1935. By Simon Kusnets. National Bureau of Economic Research. $1.50.

In this valuable piece of research Mr. Kusnets defines the product of the nation's economic activity, estimates its volume in the years since the war, indicates the contributions to it of the different parts of the economic system, shows how its monetary equivalent was distributed and how it was utilized. Of especial importance among the facts he has brought to light are those relating to capital formation—that is, the net addition to our stock of capital goods. This, he shows, formed on the average a relatively small share of the net product but one that fluctuated violently over the period. Those who see in the uneven flow of capital a main source of dislocation in the economic system and argue for

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the necessity of long-term planning will find here useful statistical support. The book calls attention to another kindred cause of instability by making a distinction between gross national product and net national income. The difference between these totals represents the extent to which durable capital goods are used up, or, in accounting terms, depreciation and depletion. Over the period 1919-35 the annual volume of this capital consumption averaged some nine billion dollars, or roughly one-eighth of the gross product. The degree to which financial provision for such depreciation was not translated into physical provision is worth further investigation by diagnosticians of the erratic tempo of our economic machine.

FILMS

Cypress Floors

"JEZEBEL" is being recommended by Warner Brothers because it is the result of "even more than the usual amount of research increasingly necessary in present-day motion-picture production." When someone discovered that Louisiana people in 1852 slept on box springs and looked at their clocks through glass domes, and that the floors they walked on were made of cypress wood against the dampness—also that chairs and tables had feet of brass or glass so that the legs would not rot from said dampness—the brothers Warner set a staff of experts to checking these details and reproducing them, "making the film an authentic picture of life in the gay metropolis just before the Civil War." I am sorry to report that the effort was wasted on me. I didn't lift the covers from a single bed and poke the mattress, I remember no clocks at all, if the floors were cypress they could equally well have been grained concrete, and I was at no time watching a table to see how it set its feet down on glass balls—I didn't even know about the balls until I read my program going home. I was interested in the hero when he lay on a bed dying of yellow fever, and the conversation at dinner was worth listening to; but the bed could have been any bed, and I thought the table rather overloaded with expensive goblets, just as I found the whole of this New Orleans to be a period museum, with actors tiptoeing through it lest they show disrespect for the labor spent upon assembling its contents. Authentic? Who cares? Increasingly necessary research? Who thinks it necessary? Especially when the final effect is of a film glazed out of all resemblance to mankind's original clay. Hollywood has erred in this direction so long that it is depressing to hear of an increasing necessity to magnify the error.

It is a special pity in the present case because "Jezebel" has many virtues of the kind that count. Bette Davis as the spoiled belle (call her Scarlett O'Hara if you will) does some of her best acting to date, and that means good acting; George Brent as the hot-headed gentleman of honor cuts an excellent figure; and the story is permitted to drive toward its bitter conclusion—Miss Davis and Mr. Fonda riding off in a cart to die among the inhabitants of a leper island—with no false stops or starts. The thing to regret is simply that the direction was never free to use the minimum equipment. More than this is always too much, and too much of anything in art is somehow less than we want.

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NEXT WEEK

MARGARET MARSHALL will continue her series on The Columnists with a discussion of MRS. F. D. ROOSEVELT and "My Day."

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Two French films of the week are concerned, perhaps not by coincidence, with the doings of children. The better of the two, "Generals Without Buttons" (Filmarte), is announced as a satire on war, and it may be that; but I miss the point. The children of neighboring villages do engage in a kind of war with one another, and their elders play an unedifying part in its conclusion. Nothing seems to be said, however, on the "subject" of war as such. The children, like all French children I have seen on the screen, and perhaps like all French children, seem to be born actors. Yet even they have sometimes the air of being maneuvered—stimulated to behave like children—and the elders are for the most part without enough to do. The same thing is truer still of "Merlusse" (Continental Theater), which tells with almost criminal awkwardness the story of a schoolmaster who manages in a crisis to win the hearts of twenty small devils. The school itself is completely, even painfully, convincing; the boys are good at the incidentals; and Henri Poupon as Merlusse (Codfish) might have repeated the success he once had as Topaze. But the direction has failed; nor does it seem worth while to examine the reasons. MARK VAN DOREN

RECORDS

BEECHAM is one of the great conductors and musicians of our day, and never more evidently and excitingly so than when he conducts Mozart. This would make his set of the G minor Symphony (Columbia: three records, $5) an event if already existing sets offered as superb a performance as well recorded; and it is the greater event for the fact that they do not. Only one thing is regrettable: that Beecham has chosen to give us Mozart's first version of the work, in which there are no clarinet parts, instead of his revised version, in which the original oboe parts are rewritten for oboes and clarinets (Columbia's booklet may be misleading on this point, as it is on others).

Beecham's two-record set ($3.25) of excerpts from "Die Meistersinger"—the choral opening scene of Act 1, the crowd's greeting to Sachs in Act 3, and Walther's Prize Song complete with choral comments—was made from an actual performance in Covent Garden, and betrays that fact in the recording, which is nevertheless very fine on a phonograph with enough power for the tremendous volume. The performance is such as to justify your clamoring for recordings of complete acts of this opera under Beecham's direction (instead of acts of "La Bohème")—and these with a more distinguished tenor than Rolf.

Grieg's Piano Concerto (Columbia: four records, $6) has its enjoyable moments, but I can think of a half-dozen concertos of Mozart that would furnish more consequential employment for Gieseking's beautiful playing. Perhaps Brahms's Gipsy Songs, in a Columbia two-record set ($3.25), have their points too; if so, these are concealed in the unrelievedly opaque tone of Lehman Engel's eighteen Madrigal Singers singing away at music written to be sung by four—and to be sung, I imagine, with lightness and flexibility. Mr. Engel is a composer; and I am therefore surprised by his repeated indifference to this matter of texture.

Columbia's album of Gieseking's performances of works by Debussy (six records, $8) merely assembles a number of previously issued singles, some of which I have already commented on in this column. That leaves only Selmar Meyrowitz's brilliant performance with the Paris Symphony ($1) of Chabrier's "Bourrée Fantasque," a representative work of one of the most individual and fascinating of minor masters.

The Columbia surface continues to be afflicted with the loose residue that makes the first playings a torment; and I think it would be a good thing for the people who have written to me complaining about the surface to write to Columbia (1776 Broadway, New York), which might then believe that there are people besides myself who complain. I must add, however, that one reader has written to say that no records of his acquaintance have been completely free of the nuisance—which is not true of records of my acquaintance: the English Columbia and H.M.V. surfaces were a pleasure, and here the recent Gamut surfaces have been flawless; but Deccas are bad, and recently Victors also have developed the affliction. Another reader concedes that the first playings of Columbias are trying, but does not mind because after that the surface is and remains quiet, and "a record should be judged, not by its first two or three playings, but by its two-hundredth." My answer is that I have known Columbia surfaces to remain noisy, and that it is not necessary for the first playings to be trying in order that the later ones may be quiet. It is not the loose residue that makes Columbia surfaces quiet when they are quiet; this residue, I am told, is only a defect in manufacturing process.

B. H. HAGGIN

[*Joseph Wood Krutch's drama criticism, omitted from this and the preceding issue, will appear as usual next week.*]

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Letters to the Editors

Two "Positive" Conclusions

Dear Sirs: I read with much interest your editorial, Russian Tragedy, Act III, in your issue of March 12. In striving to be "fair" to both the Stalinites and the Trotskyites, *The Nation* is forced to adopt an attitude of contemplative negation instead of contributing the positive analysis so greatly needed. *The Nation's* contention that all the facts in the case are not available is the apogee of Olympic liberalism. Can we wait until all the facts are in to determine our role in the coming struggle for power? Our decisions about the Moscow trials must determine our position in regard to the popular-front theory, collective security, and almost every contemporary political activity. Hitler and Mussolini will not wait until "history" reveals the truth to us. They are busy making history.

It is my opinion that although the trials were a frame-up, the defendants were guilty of overt anti-Stalinist action. The Stalinist regime has so grossly betrayed revolutionary concepts that these defendants had no other course but to attempt to overthrow the government. The assertions that the defendants were engaged in counter-revolutionary activity as far back as 1919 is of course absurd and represents an effort to discredit them in the eyes of Russian children, whose schoolbooks have been filled with panegyrics of these very men.

This is no time for *The Nation* to straddle the most important questions of the day. By all means, investigate the problem impartially—but emerge from your investigation with a positive conclusion that can be socially and politically implemented.

SYDNEY J. HARRIS

Chicago, March 17

Dear Sirs: After reading your editorial comment and also that of your contributor, Oswald Garrison Villard, on the third trial of traitors to the Soviet Republics, I should like to ask the following questions:

1. After reading the testimony of the trial in detail, does it seem plausible that the conspiratory treachery of the accused, beginning in 1917 and now terminating in 1937, should have occurred, although frustrated in part? I say yes.

2. Does it seem plausible that the governments of Great Britain, Germany, Poland, and Japan, should have attempted to get certain information from the Soviets and have organized a spy system, for which they of course needed persons of authority in Soviet government circles? I say yes.

3. With the history of the world what it is, with lust for power innate in many individuals and the cause of uncountable conspiracies, assassinations, and wars, does it seem plausible that Trotsky, Bukharin, Yagoda, and the others should have acted as they did, according to the testimony adduced during the trial? I say yes.

4. Under the circumstances does it not seem possible that the intellectual planner of all this treacherous opposition to Lenin and Stalin—Leon Trotsky—has been in the pay of enemies of the Soviets? I say yes.

I am not a member of the Communist, Socialist, or any other political party, and I like to be fair; but the evidence adduced by the government against these twenty-one former coworkers of Lenin and Stalin has very few marks of being manufactured. To any fair-minded person it is far superior to that used against the Chicago anarchists, against Tom Mooney, or against Sacco and Vanzetti. AUGUST RUEDY

Cleveland, Ohio, March 16

Foster Parents Wanted

Dear Sirs: The thousands of homeless and orphaned Spanish children concentrated in the refugee depots of Valencia and Barcelona figure daily in the casualty lists, grim reminder of the non-intervention jest. Comparative safety and a reasonably normal life are offered these children in the colonies supported by contributions from the democratic friends of Spain. Removal of the children to these colonies, which are high in the mountains and far from the theater of war, is made possible by the Foster Parent Plan for Children in Spain.

Twenty-five cents a day insures a child's maintenance and provides him with the love, companionship, and supervision necessary to efface the terror of these past months. The individual or the group which guarantees this sum for a year may choose a child from the thousands of homeless in our files. The foster parent is provided with a photograph and life history of the child. Letters are exchanged, translation and transmission being insured by the plan. Every cent of the contribution finds its way to Spain.

The Foster Parent Plan, organized in England by John Langdon-Davies, has been extended to America under the sponsorship of Dorothy Parker, Frances Farmer, Ernest Meyer, Harold Lund, and others. Further inquiries and contributions may be addressed to the Secretary of the Foster Parent Plan for Children in Spain, Room 212, 381 Fourth Avenue, New York City.

ERIC G. MUGGERIDGE

New York, March 17

Lisle Stockings, Union Made

Dear Sirs: The following union mills manufacturing branded full-fashioned stockings are making lisle stockings now:

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While there are union mills making lisle stockings that are not listed above, their products are not branded, and it is impossible for the purchaser to identify them. LAWRENCE ROGIN,
Educational Director, American Federation of Hosiery Workers

Philadelphia, March 15

Canadian Opinion

Dear Sirs: I suspect that the liberal wing of public opinion is too readily convinced that it constitutes a numerically important as well as an intellectually significant section of the people. Apropos *The Nation's* statement in its issue of March 5 that Canadian opinion is hostile to the foreign policy of the British government I submit the results of an examination of the files of 46 Canadian daily papers, intended to ascertain their editorial reactions to the

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events which precipitated the resignation of Anthony Eden. They are as follows: favorable to Chamberlain, 31; favorable to Eden, 6; neutral or noncommittal, 5; no comments, 4.

ROBERT BROWNSON

Ottawa, March 11

CONTRIBUTORS

PAUL Y. ANDERSON is on the Washington staff of the St. Louis *Star-Times.*

LOUIS FISCHER, formerly *The Nation's* Moscow correspondent, was in Spain last summer and fall reporting the civil war. He has just returned to Europe after spending the winter in New York.

HENRY B. KRANZ, a Viennese newspaperman, playwright, and novelist, came recently to New York. He has adapted the plays of Robert Sherwood and Elmer Rice for European production.

SELDEN C. MENEFEE, a resident of Seattle, has made a special study of politics in the state of Washington.

FRANZ HOELLERING, born in Vienna, had a distinguished career as a journalist in Berlin, serving as editor of the famous *AIZ,* the *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung,* and on the editorial staff of the Ullstein publications. He is now living in this country.

MARK VAN DOREN, well known as poet and critic, published last winter a new volume of verse, "The Last Look, and Other Poems."

PAUL M. SWEEZY is an instructor in economics at Harvard University and an editor of the *Review of Economic Studies.*

PAUL ROSENFELD, author of "By Way of Art," is a well-known critic of modern painting. He has contributed articles on art to *The Nation,* the *New Republic,* and other periodicals.

PHILIP RAHV is one of the editors of the *Partisan Review.*

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The Fight

in Spain Goes On

"A glorious people vibrated again
The lightning of the nations; Liberty
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Scattering contagious fire into the sky,
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Again Spain fires the imagination of the world's heart as it did in Shelley's time. And will there be victory again—in a larger sense? THE FIGHT, magazine of the American League for Peace and Democracy, in its special 64-page April issue, all devoted to Spain, examines the question from all angles and says "Yes" . . . Here, the unconquerable spirit of Spain glows in a 17-page photo-pictorial—a magazine within a magazine. Here the text, with illustrations in five colors, contains articles by George Seldes, on reportorial distortions of the New York *Times;* by Carleton Beals on Latin America and Franco; by James Waterman Wise, just returned from Spain, on the unity of the people. In all, thirteen articles by authoritative writers on the struggle in Spain. Full-page cartoon by Art Young and illustrations by other well-known artists. No one whose mind and heart are moved by this "glorious people" dares ignore this historic April issue devoted entirely to the Fascist invasions of Spain. Nor should anyone miss other numbers of THE FIGHT, rich as they are in monthly information on the struggle for peace and Democracy—not when twelve months of them cost but a dollar!

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